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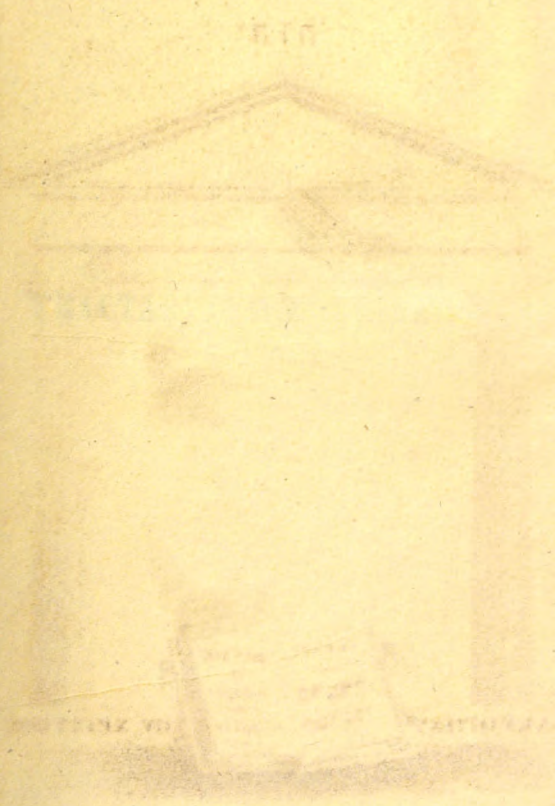

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TRACTARIANISM TESTED.

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TRACTARIANISM TESTED

BY

HOLY SCRIPTURE

AND

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

IN A

Series of Sermons.

BY

HUGH STOWELL, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, MANCHESTER; AND HON. PREBENDARY OF CHESTER.

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CONTENTS.

SERMON VIII.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

GALATIANS ii. 16.—"Knowing that a man is justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." PAGE 1

SERMON IX.

ON BAPTISM.

1 PETER iii. 21.—"The like figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 52

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SERMON X.

SIN AFTER BAPTISM.

1 JOHN ii. 1, 2.—"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." . . 114

SERMON XI.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. x. 15, 16.—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say, The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of Christ?" . . . 147

SERMON XII.

FASTING AND VOLUNTARY HUMILITY.

ISAIAH lviii. 5, 6, 7.—"Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose

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the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house: when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" . . 191

SERMON XIII.

FORMS, CHURCH ARCHITECTURE, AND CHURCH FURNITURE.

JOHN iv. 24.—"God is a Spirit, and they that worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth." 225

SERMON XIV.

RECAPITULATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

JUDE 3.—"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." . . 274

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SERMONS.

SERMON VIII.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

GALATIANS ii. 16.—"Knowing that a man is justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

"How shall man"—sinful man—"be just with God?" "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God?" "What must I do to be saved?" No question is so momentous as this question. All other questions

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are, in comparison, "as the small dust of the balances." To make light of it, is to judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life, and betokens a mind either fearfully deluded or fatally seared. But in proportion as the inquiry is vital, must error in resolving it be ruinous. A mistake on some points may be only injurious; a mistake on this point can hardly fail to be fatal. If then we have already found mournful proof that we are not waging a warfare about words, or about matters of mere taste or ceremony, but rather, that we are at issue with those whom we are opposing, on subjects which must be ranked amongst the first principles of revelation, we shall have further and more startling evidence of the same kind in sifting their views on the cardinal doctrine now before us, *the doctrine of Justification by Faith.* God grant to us the Spirit of light and love, that we may undertake and carry out this discussion, not with a speculative, controversial disposition, but with a lowly,

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earnest longing after truth—simply bent on knowing the truth, that the truth may make us free!

In the present instance we shall somewhat vary our accustomed method of discourse, and in the outset bring into contrast the sentiments of the Tractarian school, and the decisions of our apostolical church. We shall then adduce the testimony of Holy Scripture in refutation of the former, and in confirmation of the latter.

Speaking on the subject of our justification before God, one of the leading Tractarian writers thus expresses himself, "Christ is our righteousness by dwelling in us by the Spirit. He justifies us by entering into us. He continues to justify us by remaining in us."* Rome herself does not more completely confound sanctification with justification than it is confounded in this passage. Christ *in* us, not *on* us; Christ formed in our souls as

* Newman's Lect. on Justification, p. 167.

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our meetness for heaven, not Christ believed in as the end of the law for righteousness, is set forth as securing our acceptance with God. To the same effect it is added,—"Justification is a continual work, it must be the Spirit's work, not Christ's."* So again, "Justification is an imparting of righteousness, a work of the Holy Ghost, a spiritual gift or presence in the heart.†

In all these statements, *how utterly is the work of Christ* FOR US, *set aside!* It might have neither part nor lot in our justification. According to the theory thus avowed, it is not what the Reconciler wrought for us, but what the Sanctifier works in us, that makes us just in the sight of God; so that the Holy Spirit, rather than the Saviour, is to be regarded as our Justifier. Equally unsound is the following extract: "It is a distinct question altogether, whether with the presence of God the Holy Ghost, we can obey unto justifi-

* Newman's Lect. on Justification, p. 256.

† Ibid. p. 247.

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cation; and while the received doctrine in all ages of the church has been, that through the largeness and peculiarity of the gift of grace we can, it is the distinguishing tenet of the school of Luther, that through the incurable nature of our corruption we cannot."* Once more, the same author asserts, "Justification consists in the habitation in us of God the Father and the word Incarnate by the Holy Ghost." "To be justified is to receive the divine presence within us, and be made a temple of the Holy Ghost."† We will only add the testimony of another divine of the same stamp: "The Anglican doctrine," says he, "conceives justification to be not imputation merely, but the act of God imparting his divine presence to the soul through baptism, and so making us temples of the Holy Ghost."‡

* Newman's Lect. on Justification, pp. 68, 69.

† Ibid. p. 160.

‡ Dr. Pusey's letter to the Bishop of Oxford, pp. 70, 71.

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Such are some of the startling positions put forward by these misguided men. And so keenly are they set against the views which they oppose, that we find the following language used in a periodical which was long their chosen organ. Treating of the doctrine of Justification by faith only, which it brands as "the Lutheran system," it thus bitterly expresses itself—"To speak as if this latter scheme of doctrine were in itself, otherwise than radically and fundamentally monstrous, immoral, heretical, and unchristian, shows but an inadequate grasp of its antagonist truth."* What Jesuit, what Romish fanatic could use expressions more outrageous than these? In truth, the entire course of teaching, specimens of which we have given you, savours so strongly of the Vatican, that it can hardly have issued from any other source. Were we to proceed at once to rehearse to you the enunciations of the Council of Trent on the doctrine

* Brit. Critic, April 1842, p. 446.

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of Justification, you would find it impossible to discriminate between the Tridentine and the Tractarian dogmas,—unless, indeed, the former be outdone in breadth and boldness by the latter. And yet, so consummate is the presumption of the Anglo-Romish authors, that these views are thrust upon us as the views of our Church; —a church, on no doctrine more full, luminous, and glorious; more primitive, protestant, and scriptural, than on this cardinal doctrine. Give ear to the voice of her eleventh article; an article which merits to be written in letters of gold on the walls of every one of her sanctuaries: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings: wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification."

Nothing can be clearer than this state-

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ment. Our justification before God is represented as resting wholly on the merit of Christ Jesus, so as to shut out all doings and deservings of our own. For further enforcement and elucidation of the doctrine, we are referred to "The Homily of the Salvation of Mankind," to a few extracts from which we therefore invite your attention. After bringing forward several passages bearing on the mode of our acceptance with God, the Homily thus goes on—"In these foresaid places, the Apostle toucheth specially three things, which must go together in our justification. Upon God's part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, justice, that is, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption, by the offering of his body, and shedding of his blood, with fulfilling of the Law perfectly and thoroughly; and upon our part true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours, but by God's working in us; so that in our justification is

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not only God's mercy and grace, but also his justice, which the Apostle calleth the justice of God, and it consisteth in paying our ransom, and fulfilling of the Law; and so the grace of God doth not shut out the justice of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the justice of man, that is to say, the justice of our works, as to the merits of deserving our justification. And therefore St. Paul declareth here nothing upon the part of man concerning his justification, but only a true and lively faith, which nevertheless is the gift of God, and not man's only work, without God. And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying. So that, although they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not altogether; neither doth faith shut out the justice of our good works, necessarily to be done afterward of duty to God, (for we are

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most bounden to serve God, in doing good deeds, commanded by him in his Holy Scripture, all the days of our life,) but it excludeth them, so that we may not do them to this intent, to be made just by doing them. For all the good works that we can do be imperfect, and therefore not able to deserve our justification; but our justification doth come freely by the mere mercy of God, and of so great and free mercy, that whereas all the world was not able of themselves to pay any part towards their ransom, it pleased our Heavenly Father, of his infinite mercy, without any our desert or deserving to prepare for us the most precious jewels of Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be fully paid, the Law fulfilled, and his justice fully satisfied. So that Christ is now the righteousness of all them that truly do believe in him."

So strong yet racy, so broad yet precise, is the language of this glorious discourse, that it is very unwillingly we limit

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ourselves to one other quotation. Setting forth the excellency of the doctrine that we are justified by faith only, we have this glowing passage: "But this saying, that we be justified by faith only, freely and without works, is spoken for to take away clearly all merit of our works, as being unable to deserve our justification at God's hands, and thereby most plainly to express the weakness of man, and the goodness of God; the great infirmity of ourselves, and the might and power of God; the imperfectness of our own works, and the most abundant grace of our Saviour Christ; and therefore wholly to ascribe the merit and deserving of our justification to Christ only, and his most precious bloodshedding. This faith the holy Scripture teacheth; this is the strong rock and foundation of Christian religion; this doctrine all old and ancient authors of Christ's church do approve; this doctrine advanceth and setteth forth the true glory of Christ, and beateth down the vain-glory of man; this

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whosoever denieth, is not to be accounted for a Christian man, nor for a setter-forth of Christ's glory; but for an adversary to Christ and his Gospel, and for a setter-forth of men's vain-glory."

Could anything be more clear, explicit, uncompromising? No quarter is given to those who darken or corrupt the great truth at stake. Those who deny it are not to be accounted Christian men,—are to be looked upon as adversaries to Christ and his Gospel. And keep in mind, we pray you, that all this is specially endorsed by the eleventh Article,—so endorsed that he who subscribes the one, virtually subscribes the other. Our Church herself then being the judge, what is the sentence which she passes on the writers whose sentiments we are contrasting with her own? Surely it is a mystery of delusion, that these men should tell us that they uphold the doctrines of the church, at the very time that they so flatly contradict them?

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We will not, however, pursue this painful train of reflection. We shall find it a more gainful task to examine the rich variety of evidence which holy Scripture furnishes in support of the great tenet which our Church so clearly and firmly enunciates. But let us beforehand state distinctly what we mean by justification through faith only. We mean, that every man who is saved, receives remission of his guilt, reconciliation with God, restoration to the divine favour, renewal by the Holy Ghost, and inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, simply and solely on account of the righteousness accomplished for sinners by the Lord Jesus Christ,—that righteousness which is styled "the righteousness of God," — received and appropriated by living faith, and consequently irrespective of all doings and deservings, whether past, present, or to come, on the part of the believer. This doctrine, you will at once perceive, lays man in the dust, and makes the Saviour all in all; tolerates no admix-

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ture of miry clay with the fine gold of heaven; beats down every attempt to deform the robe wrought by God our Saviour with the filthy rags of our best righteousnesses. It must be so, if God is to be seen as "just in justifying" the penitent; if the law is to be magnified in the forgiveness of transgression; if the throne of judgment is not be overshadowed but irradiated by the rainbow of mercy. It must be so, for man is cut off from every other hope and shut up to the faith of the Gospel. What can he do for himself; or how merit aught but death from God? "Shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin;" "his heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" "every imagination of the thoughts of it only evil continually;" "insufficient of himself to think anything as of himself;"—how can he meet the least requirement of that law which demands and can accept nothing less than perfection;—whose sentence is, "Cursed is every one that con-

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tinueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Does it not follow, therefore, that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God?"

And as we cannot, whilst unrenewed, do anything to earn, so neither can we, when renewed, do anything to enhance our justification. Indeed, the very notion of adding to a justification which is complete, of enhancing a righteousness which is divine, is as senseless as it is presumptuous. But were it otherwise, the thing is utterly beyond the power of the holiest upon earth, for "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Hence David exclaimed, "If thou Lord shouldest be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?" And St. Paul declares of himself (and where is the man who assumes that he is holier than Paul?) "when I

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would do good evil is present with me, for the good I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." To the same effect he testifies of the regenerate in general — "the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Now if such be the state of the best whilst militant here on earth, and if God is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity," and "chargeth his angels with folly," can it be imagined for a moment that anything which his people render to him can be meritorious in his sight,—can challenge his justice, instead of craving his mercy? Or can it for an instant be thought, that he will accept on its own account any service that is not faultless as *was* that of Adam before he fell, as *is* that of the angels who have kept their first estate? What room then is there for a progressive justification? What scope for increasing righteousness before God?

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What; whilst the best need continuous forgiveness,—the purest incessant application of the blood of sprinkling! What then mean the men who talk of our being justified by a righteousness wrought by the Spirit in our hearts? What mean they when they bow in our sanctuaries, by confessing, day after day, "we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone the things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us?" If their works are such as can satisfy God and merit his favour, such language from their lips is solemn mockery. To be consistent, therefore, they ought either to disuse the confessions of our Church, or to abandon the fond notion of self-justification. The truth is, that although the work of the Spirit in the children of God be of necessity, perfect in itself, yet is it so tinged and tarnished by the corrupt nature in which it is being wrought, that, as the prophet declares, "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;"

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they must be washed in the fountain of atonement to make them well-pleasing to God; and the holiest man is not so holy that he may discard the Publican's prayer, —"God be merciful to me a sinner!" "I know," saith St. Paul, "that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." And our Church, ever echoing the voice of Scripture, teaches her children to acknowledge "there is no health in us," and declares in her article of Original or Birth-Sin—"And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *φρονημα σαρκος*, which some do expound the wisdom, some the sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." In this connexion, we cannot forbear contrasting the sentiments of one of the

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brightest prelates that ever adorned our Church with the sentiments of our Anglo-Romish divines;—a prelate so strong in his church views, that these writers do not scruple to avail themselves of his testimony when it suits their purpose. Give heed, then, to the touching acknowledgements of the holy Beveridge. "If there be not a bitter root in my heart, whence proceeds so much bitter fruit in my life and conversation? Alas! I can neither set my head nor my heart about anything, but I still shew myself to be the sinful offspring of sinful parents; nay, I do not only betray the inward venom of my heart, by poisoning my common actions, but even my most religious performances also, with sin. I cannot pray, but I sin; I cannot hear, or preach a sermon, but I sin; I cannot give an alms, or receive the sacrament, but I sin; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them; my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want

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washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties, speak me a child of Adam. Insomuch, that whensoever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment to be but as one continual act of sin." How little knew this venerable man of "obeying unto justification," of being justified "by the Spirit's work!" Whence the gulf between *his* sentiments and those of our modern ascetics? Is it that he was *less holy*, or *more humble* than they are—less skilled in the wisdom of the schools, or more versed in "the wisdom that is from above"—less fruitful in the works of the Spirit, or more acquainted with the depths of his own heart?

But it is time that we should bring forward the direct testimony of the Word of God in vindication of the view of the jus-

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tification of man which our Church maintains. And, first of all, let us recall to your minds the way in which the forgiveness of sinners is everywhere represented by Holy Writ. Even in the Old Testament Scriptures, whilst it was yet but the twilight of the day of grace, how clearly was it revealed, that the pardon of the transgressor is not a work *in him*, but *for him*--not a *progressive*, but a *perfect* act. "I," saith the Lord, "even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Again, He saith, "I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more." And yet again, "I will blot out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thine iniquities as a thick cloud." Here is no tardy, uncertain remission, but prompt and absolute obliteration of guilt. To the same effect is the pathetic invitation addressed in the opening of the prophecy of Isaiah, to the rebellious house of Israel. "Come now, and

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let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." No less gracious is another declaration of God by the same prophet. "Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will—" partially? tardily? scantily?—nay, verily, but "*abundantly pardon*;" and why? "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Well might the prophet Micah, when contemplating this sovereign grace of God, break forth in holy ecstacy and cry, "Who is a God like unto thee pardoning iniquity?"—and the pardoned son of Jesse exclaim, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

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In the New Testament, the promptitude and plenteousness with which the Saviour pardons the believer, is set forth in a thousand ways. "Thy sins be forgiven thee," was the assurance of Christ to every true penitent who sought his mercy. Of her who was emphatically branded as a sinner, who washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, he declared, "Her sins which be many are forgiven her." In full harmony with the voice of Christ is the testimony of his Apostles. "If," says St. John, "we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And again, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." What ingenuity can force this language into agreement with those views of justification which represent it as suspended on our personal obedience, as the result of a work to be accomplished in us by the Holy Ghost? How clearly do the passages adduced set forth remission

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of sin as the starting post, not the goal of obedience; as anterior to, not consequent upon, holiness; as originating, not consummating the image of God in the soul. Insomuch that his children are represented as serving him, not to be forgiven, but because forgiven; not to win his favour, but because they walk in the light of his countenance.

But the truth which we are maintaining is still more explicitly taught by the multitude of passages which set forth Christ as our righteousness, and which prove that he obeyed and suffered as our substitute, in order that we might be reputed righteous on his account. This truth St. Paul avers to be "witnessed by the law and the prophets," and so we find their testimony on the point abundant. The prophet Jeremiah accordingly, foretelling the Messiah, declared of Him,—"this is the name whereby he shall be called, "The Lord our Righteousness.'" The prophet Isaiah sweetly sang, "Surely

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shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength!" And God, speaking by the same messenger, says of his people, "their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." And in another place, the prophet speaking of *a robe put on* the faithful, not of a *texture wrought in* them, says, "He hath covered me with a robe of righteousness." Daniel also speaks of the Messiah "bringing in everlasting righteousness." To the same effect sang the sweet singer of Israel, saying, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only;" and of the saints of the Most High, he sang, "in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." It is plain then, that the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, is no new doctrine, no modern innovation: it is old as the first access of a sinner to God, as the first sacrifice on record, for, "by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacri-

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fice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead, yet speaketh."

When we pass from the testimony of the prophets to that of the apostles, our difficulty is in selecting from the rich variety of evidence presented. St. Paul asserts, that Christ is made of God to us "righteousness;" that He "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" that "David describeth the blessedness of that man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works;" and that "God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." On this last passage we cannot forbear to dwell a little. Could words make the doctrine of imputed righteousness more plain? Christ was reputed as a sinner though infinitely free from sin; the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all; he stood forth as the surety and

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substitute of mankind; his soul was made an offering for sin, as though the guilt of us all had been transferred to him; and why? what is the marvellous antithesis in the passage?—that "we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Our transgressions were placed to His account; His Divine righteousness is placed to ours, if believers in his name; and as truly as he suffered on the score of our guilt, so truly are we accepted and rewarded on the score of his merit. Just as well, therefore, might we deny that he bore our sin as to deny that we bear his righteousness. All this is vividly illustrated and enforced by the parallel which the apostle draws between Adam and Christ, as, respectively, the federal heads, the one of his natural, the other of his spiritual seed. He lays it down as a first principle, that "if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in

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life by one, Jesus Christ; therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." As really, then, as the transgression of Adam entailed guilt and death on *his* posterity, so really does Christ's obedience entail righteousness and life on *those* who believe in his name. As Adam, being the fountain of the human race, acted as their representative and head, so that in him they stood or fell, (whence it is that his apostacy is reckoned as theirs, for they come into the world under guilt as well as in corruption, otherwise, since death is the wages of sin, infants who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression would not die,)—even so the second man, who is the Lord from heaven, acted and suffered as the federal head and father

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of all the faithful, and his obedience and atonement justify their person whilst his spirit renovates their nature. But nowhere in Holy Scripture is the mode of our justification set forth more plainly in all its fulness than in the 3rd chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The Apostle having proved all men under sin, having proved that by deeds of the law no flesh can be justified, then proceeds to unfold the mystery of grace on this wise. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this

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time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Oh! the depth both of the wisdom and the grace displayed in this great salvation. Righteousness is declared in the remission of sin, mercy in its expiation. Justice appears more awful in forgiving the believer than it does in punishing the unbeliever; and love more wondrous in the atonement for sinners than in all the blessedness of the angels of God. The experimental application of all this to him that believeth, St. Paul gives us most graphically in what may be styled the history of his heart, as written in his Epistle to the Philippians. He is describing the revolution which passed upon his mind when Christ was revealed to him; and thus he proceeds: "But what things are gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do

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count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." By what ingenuity can all this be brought into accordance with any view which would lead a man to look to any work wrought *in* himself or *by* himself for acceptance with God? And yet if any think he hath whereof he may trust in the flesh, how much more had the apostle! Who ever did or underwent for Christ so much as he? Who was ever more athirst for sanctification, more intent on knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings? Yet, when he had done and suffered and attained all, it was in "the righteousness of God," "which is through the faith of Christ," and *in that alone*, he desired to be found.

There is yet another way in which the cardinal tenet under discussion may be

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proved from the word of God. It is established by all those passages which distinctly state, that we are justified by, or rather through, faith, independently of any doings or deservings of our own. Passages of this kind so abound, that we cannot do more than choose out a few of the most striking. In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul thus preaches the way of life to the people: "By him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." In like manner St. Paul writes,—"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ." "For," as he elsewhere declares, "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Again, he affirms, "therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And

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yet again, "therefore we conclude a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." It is thus that God secures the glory of his grace, for so the Apostle argues, "therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." Faith receives all, brings nothing. Faith in Christ is a simple act of recipiency. It is the belief that "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." It is the stretching forth of the hand that was withered to grasp the inestimable gift, and the very stretching forth of that hand is of the ability which grace imparts. How illustrative of all this, how strikingly apposite, the example of Abraham as brought out by the Apostle, in the portion of Scripture so opportunely occurring as the second lesson for this evening's service! That the father of the faithful was justified, all will agree. But was his righteousness the fruit of his obedience? Nay, verily, but of his faith, for "what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him

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for righteousness: now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Abraham, therefore, though held up in Scripture as a pattern of obedience, as rich in good works, was yet wholly and solely justified in the sight of God by faith in the Lord our Righteousness. Nor is it so much on account of the fruits of his faith that he is held up as an ensample to all saints, but rather as an overpowering demonstration that "the just shall live by faith." His works were the consequence, not the cause, of his justification; the seal, not the source, of his faith.

The case of Abraham is the more worthy of note, because, whilst St. Paul selects him as the great exemplification of faith, St. James make choice of him as the great pattern of works. For, as St. Chrysostom well remarks, "if Abraham, who performed

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so many good works by faith, was yet justified by faith, and not by those good works, this doth much debase the merit of works, and exalt the power of faith." At the same time, this illustration most clearly teaches, that though it be not for his good works that a man is justified, yet if he be justified, he will infallibly do such works. In this sense it is that St. James affirms a man to be justified by works and not by faith only. And thus understood, there is not (as indeed between inspired writers there could not be) the slightest discrepancy between him and St. Paul. The object of the latter was to beat down self-righteousness, the object of the former to unmask antinomianism. The one proves that we are justified by faith *only*, the *other* that we are not justified by a faith which *abides* alone; for "faith without works is dead." Whilst, therefore, we are justified before God altogether irrespectively of our works, our being so justified is determined by our works. A fruit-

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less faith is a shadow,—a notion,—a lie. A justifying faith must be a working faith, —if it do not work, neither does it justify. It is important that we should add in this connexion, that when it is said faith justifies, it is not to be understood that it does so as an act, but solely as an instrument. There is not a jot or tittle of merit in *that* act more than in any other act of fallen man. It must be understood as involving that Divine righteousness which it appropriates; that righteousness of God "which is unto all and upon all them that believe."

What shall we say then, men and brethren? Is the clear shining after a shower more bright than is the proof from Holy Scripture that "we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"? To be blind to this truth, is to be blind to the gospel. Its glory, its grandeur, its graciousness, its joyfulness, all centre here. Let the worldly wise, the scribe, the dis-

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puter of this world, scout the doctrine as foolish,—mystical,—unimaginable; to the man that is spiritual, to the unfilmed eye of faith, it has a glory all its own,—an excellency which in comparison makes all beside seem dim and poor. What though the greatness of its mystery cannot be reached, nor the depth of its wisdom fathomed, is not this evidential of its truth —does it not demonstrate that it is of God? He saves as the infinite—he saves infinitely. His restoration of a believing sinner to his favour, his likeness, his family; the elevation of that believer to a throne in heaven, is *so* accomplished, that instead of a single attribute being compromised or obscured, all the Divine attributes are manifested in fullest harmony and richest effulgence; instead of the majesty of the moral law being lowered, or the stability of the divine government impaired, the one is so magnified, and the other so confirmed, as to darken the horror of hell, and heighten the ecstacy of heaven.

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Before winding up this discourse, we are wishful to obviate one or two specious objections against the great doctrine which we have been handling; objections which, frequently as they have been refuted, are still more frequently alleged. The most common, and it must be granted the most plausible of these, is the argument that to represent man as justified without works, will inevitably lead him to be heedless of works; or, as St. Paul states, will lead men to say, "let us sin that grace may abound." Brethren, no doubt there are some, (would to God there were few,) who turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into lasciviousness; who imprison the truth in unrighteousness; who argue from grace to licentiousness, and, as the same apostle sternly pronounces,—"their damnation is just." But what doctrine of Holy Scripture is there which the carnal mind has not abused and will not abuse? Such perversion is not peculiar to this tenet. It is occasioned not by the doctrine, but by

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the heart: nor is it more fair or rational to charge such abuse upon the truth itself, than it would be to bring it as a charge against the beams of the sun that, whilst they exhale sweet odours from the spicy grove, they draw forth deadly vapours from the rank morass. St. Paul is so far from giving the slightest weight to the objection, that when he has put the question, "do we then make void the law through faith?" he unhesitatingly answers, "yea, we establish the law." And that such is the legitimate consequence of this doctrine is plain indeed to those who have spiritual discernment; for they cannot but perceive that in this way, and in no other, can the transgressor be justified, not by *abating*, but by *maintaining* the rigour of the law; not by *modifying* and so *neutralising* its unchangeable requirements, but by *fulfilling them, even to the uttermost*; not by *setting aside* and so *bringing into contempt* its inexorable penalties, but by expiating them with an infinite expiation.

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It is those who would in any measure put off *the demands* of the law with *our faulty obedience* and *the penalties* of the law with our *tears and penances*, who, in very deed, dishonour it and make it void. Salvation through faith is not grace trampling the law under foot in order to rescue the transgressor, it is grace upholding, fulfilling, vindicating the law to its last jot and tittle in the acquittal and recompense of him that believeth in Jesus.

But not only does this mode of salvation establish the intrinsic authority of the law, it no less effectually establishes its power over the heart of the faithful. No longer under the insupportable yoke of the law as a *condition*, they have come under its gentle sway as a *rule*, of life. No longer shuddering beneath its impending penalties, they are free to love its ungrievous precepts. The spirit of bondage is displaced by the spirit of adoption, and the commandments are transferred from the tables of stone to the fleshy tables of the reno-

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vated heart. Hence the reasoning of the Apostle,—so solecistic to the carnally-minded, so clear to the spiritually-minded: "sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." Thus, and only thus, can you secure the willing, hearty, unreserved obedience of love;—the sole obedience which the God of love can accept, the sole obedience worthy of the name. Set a culprit, as a slave, on the taskwork of satisfaction, with the peradventure that he may at last work out his own deliverance,—the lash all the while overhanging him,—the misgiving that he shall come short in the end ever haunting and dispiriting him,—and is it in the nature of things that he will have energy for his toil, that he can take pleasure in his drudgery? But how contrasted with this is the influence of mercy! If one of yourselves, brethren,—a son, who had outraged your kindness, scorned your authority, lacerated your heart, forsaken his home, and wasted your goods in riotous

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living, but who, at length, was come to himself, and trembling, forlorn, and weeping, sought your door, what would be the effect upon him were you to meet him with bitter upbraiding, to spurn him from your presence, or inflict upon him some overwhelming task of expiation? Would you not, in all likelihood, crush the solitary germ of amendment in his breast, and fling him back on desperation and wretchlessness? On the other hand, were you to welcome him with the yearning of a father's bowels, not making light of his faults, yet, whilst representing them in all their heinousness, shewing that parental affection could forgive them all; were you to clothe him, feed him, and rejoice over him, own him, trust him, and cherish him,—would you not take the surest way to reclaim your child, establish confidence between him and you, enkindle gratitude, and beget sincere, ingenuous contrition in his heart for having wounded such a father? If anything could change his disposition

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and elevate his character, would it not be such a course of treatment? And so it is that the Father of mercies and God of all grace brings back the prodigal to himself, and puts him upon spontaneous, hearty, happy obedience. He tarries not till the penitent has made reparation, has proved the sincerity of his repentance by its fruits, for it needs not to be proved to Him; He sees him when yet a great way off, and has compassion on him, and runs and falls on his neck and kisses him, and says of him, "this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost and is found." Then He bids the accepted sinner go and do His will, not in order to pardon, but because already pardoned; not to win His love, but because His love has been freely bestowed; not to merit Heaven, but to become meet for that inheritance to which he is entitled through the righteousness of the Lamb.

Brethren, we might fearlessly challenge the reason of men, darkened and warped

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as it is by unbelief, to say whether the method of justification set forth in the Gospel be not the method most accordant to reason, the method most likely to secure holiness in the believer as well as the glory of the God in whom he believes. The whole scope of the Gospel may be summed up in two sentences,—to abase the sinner, to exalt the Saviour; and we put it to you, beloved, whether the doctrine of our reformers, or the doctrine of their modern opponents, is most fitted to ensure this two-fold end?—The doctrine which teaches that man is, in some sort, made a partner with his Redeemer in the achievement of forgiveness; that his own works, wrought by him through the Holy Spirit, gradually and uncertainly win his acceptance with God,—the doctine which makes the Redeemer the remote cause, and the man himself the proximate cause, of his salvation—or the doctrine which strips the sinner of all self-confidence, that he may be arrayed with a righteousness

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divine; which makes the happy servant nothing, and the gracious master "all in all;" which prompts the sentiment of St. Paul,—"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ," and attunes the spirit for the song of the glorified, —"Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests"? Yes, beloved, there is no hope for us, no peace, no holiness but in this sovereign way. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"— And therefore a divine Saviour, and because a divine,—an infinite Saviour; and because an infinite,—a Saviour *altogether*.

It appears, then, men and brethren, on a full and fair examination, in the light of Scripture, of the opinions propounded by the Anglo-Romish school on the doctrine

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of justification, that they are fearfully unsound. But if such be the fact, then away with the insinuation that our controversy with them is about names and forms! Is it not, rather, about the pith and core of the Gospel? Take the truth on which we have been dwelling out of the Book of Life, and it is the *Gospel* no longer. Its whole nature is transmuted, its whole aspect transformed. As, therefore, we value the glorious gospel of the blessed God, as we prize the hope of the believer, as we are jealous for the honour of our Lord,—we must earnestly contend against the heresy which would mar them all.

How unfathomably wise, how unspeakably grand, God's method of accepting the believer! Well may angels desire to look into it! Well may it be the crowning display "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places," of "the manifold wisdom of God!" The bare conception of the idea of "so great salvation" could have arisen in no created

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mind, much less could the stupendous scheme for realizing the idea have been framed by any finite intelligence. The evidence of revelation might be rested on this characteristic; it is self-demonstrative of its divine origin; it attests the book which exhibits it to be the Book of God.

Fellow-sinners, behold the way of life! Beware, lest you stumble at its threshold! Take heed, lest going about to establish your own righteousness, you do not submit to the righteousness of God. You cannot too promptly, too simply, too firmly lay hold and keep hold of Christ Jesus as made of God unto you—RIGHTEOUSNESS. Cling to His righteousness even as the shipwrecked mariner clings to the plank which he has grasped when sinking in the waves. Let not Satan, let not your deceitful heart persuade you that it is presuming so to believe. The presumption is—not to believe,—for "he that believeth not, maketh God a liar." God

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give you grace to receive life as freely as it is freely given!

Fellow-Christians! see that your lives give evidence which cannot be gainsayed, that the doctrine you so prize is, in the language of our church, "a wholesome doctrine;" or, in the language of Scripture, "a doctrine according to godliness." "Adorn *the doctrine of God your Saviour* in all things." Prove that your hearts are set at liberty, not to forsake, but to run in, the way of God's commandments, still give occasion to the unbeliever to urge against the disciples of Christ the contradictory objections, that on the one hand their principle is licentious, and on the other, their practice extreme. Put to silence the ignorance of foolish men by the argument of the life; that argument so plain that the peasant may understand it, so strong that the philosopher cannot evade its force.

Children of God, realize and rejoice in the strong consolation which God hath

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provided for you in the righteousness of Christ. Approve in your own hearts the beautiful language of our church, that this doctrine is "full of godly comfort." How would our "peace be like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea;" if we walked in the full fruition of our completeness in Christ! For "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" If our judge be our justifier, and our substitute, he against whom we transgressed, what can be more perfect than our pardon—what more secure than our hope? Then,—whilst giving all "diligence to make your calling and election sure,"—whilst doing all—and when you have done all,—utterly renounce all, for confidence, for comfort, save the sole righteousness of Christ,—"On that righteousness rest, on that righteousness live, on that righteousness die, in that righteousness appear before the judgment-seat, on that righteousness stand for ever in the presence

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of the righteous God." I have witnessed and watched the death-beds of some of the holiest and best of believers, and I never saw one of them who did not in that awful scene repudiate all confidence in his own sanctification and deservings, (however thankful for the work of the Spirit of God in him and by him,) and who did not, as he passed to the dread tribunal, cling simply and absolutely to the cross of Atonement. As one, who had lived—how blamelessly, how faithfully!—said to me in her last days,—"I have no hope but in Christ crucified: I cling to Him as earnestly as if I had been a murderer." Lovely lowliness! May our last end be like hers! May we in life and in death adopt as our own the language of him who has been well styled the judicious, and who never spake more judiciously than when he thus gave utterance to his faith: "I must take heed what I say, but the Apostle saith, 'God made him to sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be

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made the righteousness of God in him.' Such we are in the sight of God the Father as is the very Son of God himself. Let it be accounted folly, or frenzy, or fury, or whatsoever else, it is our comfort and our wisdom. We care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered,—that God hath made himself sin for men, and that men are made the righteousness of God."

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SERMON IX.

ON BAPTISM.

1 PETER iii. 21.—"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

THAT tendency in the human mind to rush into extremes, which we have had reason again and again to notice in the progress of the present series of discourses, has on no subject manifested itself more strongly than on that which this evening waits for our attention. It has been handled so frequently in a controversial, so seldom in a calm and prayerful spirit, that it is no marvel it should have been

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mystified rather than simplified, buried in contradiction rather than brought forth into light. Some, in their zeal to make much of the ordinance of Christ, others, in their anxiety to arm the priesthood with power, have confounded the sign with the grace which it signifies, and given to the institution the semblance of a charm rather than of a reasonable and believing service. Recoiling from these extravagances, many have either set aside the institution altogether, or else, retaining the form, have degraded it into an unmeaning ceremony; a badge of discipleship, not an instrument of grace. How far our church has been enabled to steer safely in this case, as she has in so many other instances, between the shoals which on either hand beset the course of truth, is a question of no small interest. On no point have her views been subjected to severer blame than on this point. Not only have they been reprobated by thousands who are unfriendly to her, they have

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been extensively arraigned or distrusted by persons who, on the whole, accord with her. Tracts and volumes without end have been written on the question, yet the debate is as undetermined as ever. The minds of multitudes are utterly afloat as to the purpose and benefit of baptism in the view of our church.

Under the deep consciousness, then, of the delicacy and intricacy of the investigation on which we are entering, it is our devout and earnest wish to take it in hand discreetly, advisedly, and dispassionately; unwarped by party, unbiassed by prejudice, open to conviction; aiming solely to trace out truth, truth only, and for the truth's sake. Throughout the discussion, may our hearts be uplifted to the Spirit of Truth, that His gentle power may influence and compose, His bright beams illumine and direct us!

Our order will be, in the first place, to exemplify the views inculcated by the Tractarian school on the sacrament of

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baptism; in the next place, to illustrate the teaching of Holy Scripture as contrasted with these views; and afterwards, to ascertain and justify the opinions of the Church of England, in the first place on adult, and in the next place on infant baptism.

I. The unsound notions advocated by the Tractarian writers, we shall but briefly bring forward; for, as you will have clearly seen, our desire is not so much to expose error as to substantiate truth. In one of the tracts, written expressly on baptism, we have the following passage.—"This is our new birth, an actual birth of God, of water and of the Spirit, as we are actually born of our parents; herein, then, also are we justified, or both accounted and made righteous, since we are made members of Him who alone is righteous."* Still more positively does the same writer express himself in a subsequent part of the same treatise. "But a commencement

* Pusey on Baptism, p. 23.

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of life in Christ after baptism, a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, at any other period, than of that one introduction into God's covenant, is as little consonant with the general representations of Holy Scripture, as a commencement of spiritual life, long after our natural birth, is with the order of His providence."* But as if even this language did not go far enough, he subsequently declares,—"No change of heart, then, or of the affections, no repentance however radical, no faith, no love, come up to the idea of this birth from above; it takes them all in and comprehends them all, but itself is more than all; it is not only the creation of a new heart, new affections, new desires, *and as it were a new birth, but is an actual birth from above,* or from God,—a gift coming down from God, and given to faith through baptism; yet not the work of faith, but the operation of 'water and the Holy Spirit;' the Holy Spirit giving us

* Pusey on Baptism, p. 28.

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a new life in the fountain opened by Him, and we being born therein of Him, even as our blessed and incarnate Lord was, according to the flesh born of Him, in the Virgin's womb."* To crown all, he quotes the following hymn from one of the old liturgies used on raising the child from the water as expressive of his own sentiment:—"Spread thy wings, holy church, and receive the gentle lamb which the Holy Spirit hath begotten of the waters of baptism; hail! thou new Lamb, Son, begotten of baptism, whom I have begotten of the waters in the name of the Trinity.'"

Further extracts are not needed to show how undisguisedly this author avows and abets what may be fitly styled the Romish figment of the "*opus operatum*;" or, to speak plainly, that the ordinance itself necessarily contains and conveys the grace which it signifies; so that infants at least are by baptism, positively, not conditionally,

* Pusey on Baptism, p. 40.

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irrespectively of faith, and independently of all circumstances, save the authorised administration of the rite, born again of the Holy Ghost, endued with a new nature, justified absolutely, and made heirs of the kingdom of heaven. All this follows as a consequence from the exaggerated estimate of the efficacy of the sacraments entertained by the Tractarians. "Had we," says one of them, "been left to conjecture, we might have supposed, that in the more perfect or spiritual system, the gifts of grace would rather have been attached to certain high moral performances, whereas *they are deposited in mere positive ordinances*, as if to warn us against dropping the ceremonial of Christianity." Equally startling and unwarranted is a declaration to the same effect, contained in another of their treatises. "Almighty God has said, his Son's merits shall wash away all sin, and that they shall be conveyed to believers through the two sacraments." Not content with propagating

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these notions themselves, they represent all the clergy who shrink from adopting them, as unfaithful to their profession, false to their church, and either the subjects of gross delusion, or guilty of gross dissimulation. Whether or not they are so must be resolved by a full and comprehensive investigation of the mind of the church, as developed in her formularies, articles, and homilies. But, ere we turn to this branch of our discussion, let us ascertain the doctrine of Scripture respecting Christian baptism.

II. In the outset, let us look narrowly at some of the passages which are chiefly relied upon by those who contend for the inseparableness of the outward sign from the inward grace. Let us try whether they will bear the system which it is attempted to build upon them. Of these passages there is none on which more stress is laid than on the asseveration of our Lord Jesus Christ to Nicodemus,— "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a

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man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." From these words and from the entire context, nothing can be clearer than that a spiritual change must pass on every child of Adam, every one born of the flesh—a change so vital that it is nothing less than a new birth, the generation of another life in the soul. Nothing can be clearer than that except a man become the subject of this change, he can neither discern nor partake of the salvation of God. It is equally clear that this change is effectuated by the Holy Ghost. So far, there is no debate, but then the questions arise, — "Is not water associated with the divine agent in the work? Is it not baptism which is intended by the expression? and, consequently,—Is not this sacrament indispensable to, and inseparable from, the great change?" We reply —water is indeed mentioned in connexion with the Spirit as having to do with the new birth; but it does not follow that

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christian baptism, which Christ had not yet ordained, was intended; for though John the Baptist said of Jesus,—"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,"—who, *therefore*, imagines that fire is to be literally, not emblematically, understood? Granting, however, that it was to baptism the Lord referred, let it be noted that mention is made of it only once in the discourse with Nicodemus, whilst the agency of the Spirit in our regeneration is insisted upon again and again. What more, then, can be fairly concluded from the single expression used, than that baptism is "generally necessary to salvation;" that without being baptized we cannot enter into the kingdom of Christ, that is his visible church—we are not recognised as Christians? But would it not be quite an assumption to deduce from the words that baptism is always accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost?

Another portion of Scripture commonly adduced in proof of the inseparableness

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of baptism from salvation, is that part of the commission of Christ to his disciples in which he declares,—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In this instance, as in that on which we have already remarked, the outward sign and profession, as well as the inward act and grace, are required; but that they cannot be dissevered, or that they are co-essential, is certainly not indicated by the closing clause of the verse. It could not be without a reason that our blessed Lord, who never introduced or left out a word in his teaching but upon the fullest design, failed to connect the two expressions in the converse of his proposition, and simply said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Is it not obvious from this that Christ laid the chief stress on the faith of the heart, making *it* the hinge of everlasting destiny; so that the unbeliever, whether baptized, or unbaptized, cannot be saved? At the same time it is evident from the declaration of the Saviour that

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baptism is, as our catechism expresses it, "generally necessary to salvation," or, as the article asserts, "of great necessity where it may be had." He, therefore, would be guilty of a grave mistake who, in his zeal for faith, should disesteem the ordinance of his Master.

The words of St. Peter which we have affixed to this discourse, are conceived by many to favour the imagination that baptism insures salvation. Alluding to the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water, the apostle adduces that deliverance as beautifully typical of our salvation by Christ, and of baptism as the expressive symbol of that salvation. "The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us." Had he stopped here, he would have seemed to countenance the idea that the outward ordinance saves;—but, as if to guard against this error, and to make it clear that the ordinance never saves but when it is faithfully received—that it is the

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consummation rather than the cause of the new birth,—he adds :—" not the puting away of the filth of the flesh,"—that is, not the mere washing of the body from pollution by water,—" but the answer of a good conscience toward God." His allusion is to that profession of faith which we find from Holy Scripture always preceded the reception of baptism; consequently, the efficacy of the ordinance is made to turn upon the truth and sincerity of the belief avouched, rather than on the due administration of the visible rite. The point thus brought out is of so much moment in this discussion, that we will enlarge upon it a little, instead of adducing more of the texts relied upon by the advocates of absolute baptismal regeneration.

Let the instances of baptism which are recorded in the Bible be fairly analysed, and it will be found that repentance and faith were regarded as preceding, rather than originating in, the sacrament; as pre-requisites rather than

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as consequents. Repentance was to be deepened, and faith confirmed by the laver of regeneration—neither of them was to be therein begun. But if repentance and faith are functions of spiritual life, and if spiritual life is the result of the new birth through the Spirit, it follows that baptism is the bringing forth of the child of God into the bosom of the church, rather than the begetting and quickening of the babe in Christ; the complement, not the commencement, of regeneration. And so St. Paul teaches us—"with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Now, baptism is the believing man's confession unto salvation. In support of this view, let it be remembered how St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, exhorted those who asked what they must do, to repent, and (then) be baptized; and how we are afterwards told, "then they that received the word gladly were baptized." Let the case of the Ethiopian

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eunuch be also borne in mind, how when he said to Philip,—"See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" the Evangelist answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest;" and it was upon the strength of his confession of faith that he received the sacramental seal. No less deserving of notice is the instance of Cornelius and his friends. Whilst Peter was preaching unto them Jesus and the resurrection, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, on which Peter demanded, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In this narration, is it not too clear to be gainsayed, that the reception of the Spirit, and the exercise, of faith, *anticipated* baptism? If these examples,—and others might be added,—prove no more, they at least prove, that baptism was not the exclusive (ought we not rather to say was not the ordinary?) instrument of spiritual life.

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The same truth is witnessed by a variety of passages which ascribe the renewal of the sinner to other instrumentalities beside baptism. Let a few of these suffice. "Of his own begat he us," says St. James, "by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures, "Being born again," teaches St. Peter, "not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." "Faith," St. Paul asserts, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And, again, he declares,—"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." To the same effect are the numberless testimonies to faith as the great indispensable requisite in order to salvation. A single quotation may serve for a multitude. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Does, then, the voice of the lively oracles bear witness to baptism as the ordinary,—much less as the only—instrument of

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our restoration to spiritual life? Or would any simple student, unacquainted with creeds, unbiassed by human teaching, be led by his researches in the Holy Book to the conclusion that baptism is the one supreme means of a sinner's renewal and salvation? Would he not rather be led to infer, that it avouches and authenticates that renewal—attests and assures that salvation, increasing grace and establishing faith?

The view of baptism which we are maintaining, is, as we think, mightily borne out by the view which the Scriptures give us of the nature, import, and efficacy of the analogous rite of circumcision. The understanding of the one furnishes the best key for the understanding of the other. Circumcision under the law answered to baptism under the gospel; or, to speak more correctly, circumcision under the gospel partially developed, to baptism under the gospel fully unfolded. For circumcision was given to Abraham

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and his seed, not under the law, but centuries before the giving of the law—was given to him as the seal of that faith which he had whilst yet uncircumcised—his faith in the future gospel of the grace of God—in the righteousness of him who was to be his descendant according to the flesh, his Lord according to the Spirit. Circumcision, therefore, was the correspondent sacrament to baptism; identical in import, though diverse in aspect; the one befitting the severity of the old dispensation, the other the benignity of the new. Still, it is clear that the inward and spiritual grace or thing signified was the same. There are those, indeed, who tell us that regeneration belonged not to the Old Testament economy, that it is peculiar to our own dispensation. But where have they learned this fancy? or what sanction do they find for it in the word of God? If Christ asseverated that a man must be born again in order to see or enter into the kingdom of God, was this true after his

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coming, and did it not hold true before he came? Could there be two ways into the kingdom of heaven? Could that which was born of the flesh gain entrance there at one period any more than at another? Did the patriarchs and prophets appear before God unrenewed? This no Christian will be so hardy as to assert: but if they underwent a change, what was that change but regeneration,—the cutting off the old nature, the engrafting of a new? This, therefore, was what the initiatory sacrament of the Jewish church symbolized. So it is interpreted by the word of God,—"The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." But if circumcision was the sacrament of regeneration to Israel, were all of those who partook of the ordinance, as a consequence, spiritually regenerate? So far from it that we repeatedly find the circumcised in the flesh, addressed

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as uncircumcised in the spirit. Thus God spake to the Jews by the prophet Jeremiah: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem." And, again, it is still more strikingly said,—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt and Judah and Edom and the children of Ammon and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness, for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are *uncircumcised in the heart.*" To the same effect was the language of St. Stephen to the gainsaying Jews of his day,—"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do all ways resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did so do ye." In addition to these passages we need not do more than remind you how frequently the circumcised Israelites were exhorted to make themselves a new heart and a new

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spirit, and how often such a heart and spirit were promised to them. It follows, then, too clearly to be gainsayed, that the outward sign was not infallibly accompanied by the inward grace, nay, it is certain from the reasoning of St. Paul, that the former might anticipate and exist irrespectively of the latter, for he argues, "Cometh this blessedness then (that is, the blessedness of justification) upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only,

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but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." From all this it is manifest that circumcision was to Abraham not the cause but the consummation of his faith; for the promise which he believed, and his belief of which was counted unto him for righteousness, was that promise which he received when God foretold the birth of Isaac, from which period fourteen years elapsed before the appointment of circumcision. Whence it follows, that circumcision was not the instrument of his believing unto righteousness, but the seal and testimony of God to the faith and righteousness which he already enjoyed,—confirming that faith, and attesting that righteousness. How luminously and explicitly does the Apostle treat the subject in the following memorable passage:—"For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the

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uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Could language be more directly to our purpose? Does it not prove that the circumcision of the heart was the vital point, and that it might fail, and often did fail to result from the external rite? Does it not prove that circumcision profited, if the person circumcised kept the covenant into the bonds of which he had been introduced, and with the privileges of which he had been invested? But if he brake that covenant and slighted those privileges, his circumcision was virtually

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turned into uncircumcision? And so, may we not without fraud or force apply the same reasoning to the sacrament of baptism? Truly, may we say to him who glories in the name of Christian,—thy baptism verily profiteth if thou keep the covenant of grace, but if thou be a breaker of thy covenant, thy baptism is made unbaptism. For he is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that effectual baptism which lieth in the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and that is the true baptism which is of the heart, and not of the body only, whose praise is not of man, that judgeth according to the outward appearance, but of God who looketh on the heart. Ought any man to demur to such a use of the Apostle's reasoning? Must it not hold with fuller rather than with weaker force in relation to the more spiritual dispensation? God forbid then, that we should content ourselves, or teach others to be contented, with the

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simple fact of having been baptized. How fatal were the error which should lead men to the register of their church, rather than to the tablets of their heart and the pages of their history, for the proof of their regeneration! And let it be kept in mind that the Israelite was circumcised when eight days old, and, consequently, that the whole of the Apostle's argument bore immediately upon those who had been made partakers of the sacrament of their new birth when they could place no bar or hindrance in the way of its efficacy; so that the applicability of the whole reasoning to those baptized in infancy, no less than to those baptized in riper years, is too evident to be denied. We conclude, therefore, that Holy Scripture is so far from teaching that baptism is the infallible and exclusive means of our new birth, that it rather teaches that our new birth is the preparation for the ordinance, and that the efficacy of the ordinance is determined by the sincerity of our profession, which sin-

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cerity will be evinced in the fulfilment of our federal engagements.

III. Having examined the testimony of Scripture on the subject of baptism, we hasten to examine the teaching of our church. We do so with no misgiving but that a calm and candid attention to her voice will satisfy us that its accents are in unison with the lively oracles of which she is so faithful a keeper. It will facilitate the prosecution of our inquiry, that we should for the present, keep infant baptism in the back-ground. In doing so we shall be acting as the church has done in her articles. To those articles we would first refer. And here, in passing, we feel it right to remark, that however it may be the fashion of some men to disparage the articles whilst they exalt the formularies of the church—however it may be assumed that the former are to be modified and interpreted by the latter, we cannot for a moment defer to such assumptions. Stands

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it not to reason that when a church has digested and propounded a solemn dogmatic summary of faith, it is primarily and pre-eminently to such summary her children must appeal for her doctrinal decisions? Whilst they may fairly anticipate that her devotional services will be in harmony with her confessions, it would be unreasonable to look for statements of faith or polemical distinctions in the outpourings of the heart before God. Common sense therefore demands, that we should in the first place determine the doctrines of the church by her Articles, and then see that we understand her formularies accordantly, rather than beforehand form our views from her services, and then seek to harmonise the Articles with those views. It is on this ground, therefore, that we go at once to the Articles.

Of sacraments in general, the church thus teaches in her twenty-fifth Article. "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of christian men's

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profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him." Here, whilst the church repudiates the low view of the sacraments which some men entertain—that they are no more than badges or tokens of christian men's profession—and whilst she maintains that they are sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, she clearly holds that they are not such to the recipient irrespectively of the state of his heart, for she adds, that "by these God doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but strengthen and confirm our faith in him." It is assumed, therefore, that the faith exists which is thus quickened, strengthened, and confirmed. That this is the mind of the church is made still plainer by what follows.—"In such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation, but

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they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith." In this passage how emphatically is the stress laid on the *receiving* of the sacraments *worthily*, not as some would lay it, on the having them *rightly administered*. Give heed, we pray you, to this weighty distinction. It enters into the very kernel of the discussion. To dwell solely or chiefly on the due administration is to make the efficacy of the sacrament depend mainly on what is *without* the participent, whilst to dwell supremely on the due reception is to make the blessing of the ordinance turn principally on what exists *within the heart* of the recipient. Not that we would be thought for a moment to treat the meet administration as a thing of little import. No doubt it is of high concernment that the ordinances of Christianity should be solemnized in strict accordance with Christ's institution, and by men duly commissioned to solemnise them;

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still, all this does not avail, in the view of our church, to insure grace to those who receive either of the sacraments unworthily; so far from it, that she declares of such that they purchase to themselves damnation. How far, then, is our church from holding that the sacraments of necessity convey grace! How guiltless of representing them as sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace to the unbeliever—however strongly affirming that they are such in themselves. In farther illustration of her teaching on this critical point, we would appeal to her language in her twenty-sixth Article: — "Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their (unworthy ministers') wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the sacraments ministered unto them, which be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men." If there remained in our minds any misgiving as to

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the sentiments of the church as to the vital importance of the due reception of the holy sacraments, this decision must resolve us; for it rules, that, however unfit the administrator, the devout and believing heart shall not be on his account bereft of the promised blessing.

Let us now fix your attention on the Article which immediately relates to baptism.—"Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." All this is in strict accordance with what we have already shown to be the view of our church on the subject of the sacraments: for

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baptism is not alleged to be regeneration, but a sign of regeneration, and is represented as accomplishing its purpose only in those who receive baptism rightly. In like manner, "the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost," are declared to be "visibly signed and sealed:" expressions which indicate not so much the formation as the authentication and ratification of a covenant; and to the same effect it is added, "faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." So that faith is not said to be planted, but confirmed: grace is not said to be originated, but increased; and that by virtue of prayer as well as by the ordinance. Were it needful, and did time allow, we might still further strengthen this line of argument by appealing to the twenty-eighth Article. Words could not make it more clear than this Article makes it in relation to the Lord's supper, that the sign and sacrament may be received without

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the reception of the inward and spiritual grace: yea, to the enhancement of guilt rather than to the participation of Christ. But if this hold true in the case of the one sacrament, it must hold equally true in the case of the other.

Having, as we trust, fully brought out the teaching of our church on the subject under discussion, as recorded in her confessions of faith, we would next refer to her baptismal services, nothing doubting but that they will be found to harmonise with her Articles. Still reserving the case of infant baptism,—it is to the order of baptism for such as be of riper years we now invite your attention. Let it be noticed in the outset, that the rubric requires that before the baptism of adults, the bishop should be apprised of their desire to be baptized, and should appoint some minister in order that due care may be taken for their examination whether they be sufficiently instructed in the principles of the christian religion, and

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in order that they may be exhorted " to prepare themselves with prayer and fasting for the receiving of this holy sacrament." The candidate being thus prepared, is required in the service to make a solemn profession of his repentance, faith, and stedfast purpose to keep the commandments of God. This profession is the very hinge of the ordinance; on the strength of it baptism is administered. It is the entrance of the person into that covenant which baptism avouches and confirms. The church assumes his sincerity in making it; and if sincere, if he has the answer of a good conscience to the sponsions which he makes, the saving efficacy of his baptism is not to be mistrusted; but if insincere, impenitent, and unbelieving, —he receives the form, but lacks the power; the transaction is neutralised except so far as it brings the professor under weightier obligations, consequently under heavier responsibility, and, through his own unfaithfulness, under deeper guilt. The

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Church assumes the sincerity of him whom she baptizes,—could she do otherwise? Could she do less without adjudging him a hypocrite? and if she had evidence of his hypocrisy ought she not to shut him out altogether from her pale? But it belongs not to her to pass sentence on the heart. By their fruits are we to know men, and in those fruits we are liable to be deceived; else the foolish virgins would not go to heaven's door in company with the wise, nor the wheat and the tares grow together till the time of harvest. Nor ought this state of things to offend us, for Christ permitted Judas to be numbered with the twelve, and Peter admitted Simon Magus, on the ground of his profession, to baptism, though the one was a devil, and the other "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Shall our church, then, be arraigned for pronouncing the baptised adult regenerate and thanking God for his regeneration, after the care she has taken to insure his prepa-

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ration, and assuming, as she does in charity, that he has been sincere in his professions and has therefore "rightly received" the holy sacrament? Would her service be one of faith, hope, and charity if she did not on this wise express herself? She is only consistent in so doing; all her services are constructed on the same principle. They are framed for faithful penitents, not for faithless sinners. How else, indeed, could they have been framed! What prayers, confessions, or thanksgivings could be drawn up for the unbelieving? She has Holy Scripture for her model in going on this principle; for all the apostolical epistles, addressed to various churches, use similar language, and proceed on the same ground. Blame then the discipline of our church if you will, but blame not the spirit and tone of her baptismal and other services; the former has indeed fallen into sore laxity and decay, but the latter are scriptural, consistent, and full of faith! What, then?—shall we strive to bring down her

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formularies to her discipline, or to bring up her discipline to her formularies? To do the one would be to seal her downfall and sacrifice all hope of renovation; to do the other is the path alike of faith, of wisdom, and of truth.

The key which we have thus pointed out will be found to unlock harmoniously the after-part of the service on which we are dwelling. The exhortation to the new member of the church, the language of devout confidence, joy, and praise, which is used, must be understood as founded on the supposition that the person baptized is what he has declared himself to be, genuine in his repentance and living in his faith; or, as it is expressed in the former part of the service,—truly repenting and coming to Christ by faith. Thus understood, the doctrine of our church, so far as relates to the baptism of adults, is uniform and consistent;—her service, her catechism, and her articles are in perfect harmony.

Having so far cleared the way, it re-

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mains that we now grapple with what may be justly looked upon as the point of special difficulty in the controversy which has so long been agitated on the subject of baptism—of course we mean the case of infants who are baptized. It may be, and it will be asked, how does all that has been argued bear on irresponsible babes? Would not the train of reasoning which has been pursued forbid the little ones to come to Christ through his own appointed door, and of necessity limit baptism to persons of maturer age? Such inference we utterly deny: we yield to none in cordial acquiescence in the decision of our church,—"that the baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." As infants, under the dimmer dispensation of grace, had received the Jewish sacrament of regeneration, in obedience to the solemn injunction of God, it followed as an inevitable consequence that infants should receive the

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Christian sacrament of regeneration, under the brighter dispensation, except they were specifically shut out from so great blessing by divine appointment; but of such exclusion, what intimation, the remotest, the faintest, do we find in the gospel? Is it found in the declaration that the promise of the Spirit is "to us and to our children, and to all even as many as the Lord our God shall call?" Is it found in the prophecy,—"I will pour my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring?" above all, is it found in the touching language of the Redeemer,—"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God"—accompanied as it was with the expressive action, "He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them?" Who, then, can forbid water that these should not be baptized? If the kingdom of heaven is open to them, shall the gate of the visible church be closed? No! else were the

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Jewish parent more privileged than the Christian, and the least in the kingdom of God were not greater than the Baptist. Are we not therefore warranted,—yea, rather let us say bound,—not to doubt, but earnestly to believe, that the Lord will favourably receive the little ones who are brought in faith to his holy baptism, "that He will embrace them with the arms of his mercy, that he will give to them the blessing of eternal life, and make them partakers of his everlasting kingdom."

Still the question presses upon us—what does the church hold the efficacy of baptism in the case of infants to be? Does she hold, as some contend, that because in them there can be no moral bar or hindrance to the effect of the ordinance, they become spiritually and inevitably new creatures in Christ? or does she hold, as others would explain her strong and unequivocal language to mean, that they are merely brought within the fence of the visible church, and entitled to claim

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and plead the promises of the Gospel? That the former is not her doctrine, we shall soon strive to satisfy you; that the latter is not her view, is too obvious to be denied. Nor would it ever have been denied by any man had not controversy warped his mind. Using, as she does, the same broad and decisive language in the baptism of the infant that she does in the baptism of the adult, is it fair, is it honest, to lower or explain away its force in the one case, whilst we necessarily retain it in the other? We admit, therefore, nay we contend, that she declares in the fullest sense the baptized infant to be "regenerate,"—"born anew of the Spirit," —"made an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." But the point to be decided is, on what ground she makes these declarations,—on what supposition they are built. We believe they proceed on the very same ground in the case of the child that they do in the case of the adult, —the charitable assumption of sincerity

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and consequent faithfulness on the part of the individual baptized. That such is the view of the church in the baptism of those who are of riper age, has, we may venture to say, been undeniably proved: and where does she express any different view in relation to those who are baptized in infancy? Not in her Articles, for these recognise no distinction between the two cases, but speak of baptism *in general;* and, since infant baptism is her *rule*, adult *the exception* to her rule, it follows that her reference must have been to the former as expressly at least as to the latter. Neither does she indicate any change of ground in her service for the baptism of infants; the sponsions required are virtually the same; the exhortations given are but slightly varied; the prayers offered up are scarcely altered. True, the child acts and answers through the medium of others; yet it is *the child himself* who is regarded as acting and answering. This is clear from the mode of expression em-

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ployed: the sponsors reply "in the name of the child:" yea, the question is put as if to the child himself,—"Dost *thou* believe? — wilt *thou* be baptized in this faith?—wilt *thou* keep God's holy will and commandments?" Nothing can be greater than the common error, that sponsors pledge *themselves* that the child shall fulfil his covenant engagements. If so, who would dare to undertake the office? Who ought to arrogate the power of controlling the heart? It is *the child* they pledge. For themselves they are taught that "their part and duty is to see that the child be taught so soon as he shall be able to learn what solemn vow, promise, and profession *he has there made* by them." *They* speak, therefore, *as the mouth of the child. He* is the only party recognised in the covenant. Indeed, our church does not regard sponsorship as essential, however fitting and advantageous, in the baptism of infants. This is clear from the office for private baptism, where, without the inter-

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position of sponsors, the blessings of the covenant are assured to the babe. In truth, we see not that it materially affects the case whether the stipulations be expressed or implied; and surely, they must be assumed to be implied by all Christians who administer the ordinance to infants but do not accompany it with sponsorship, for they can look upon the baptized child as pledged to less than repentance, faith, and obedience? We cannot see how they can; and *these* are the promises which our church requires. Hence, we have had no hesitation in teaching those who have come to us for instruction in order to confirmation, but who had not been baptized according to the order of our church, that they might safely adopt our catechism as their own, only varying the language a little where the words godfathers and godmothers occur: as, for instance, instead of the question,—"What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you?" reading it,—"What were the engagements to

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which you were pledged in your baptism?" In acting thus, we do not see that we can be looked upon as laying ourselves open to just blame from any body of Christians who maintain the baptism of infants; since if they do not regard the ordinance as the seal of the christian covenant, in what light do they regard it? or, on what ground do they administer it to children?

That the positive language used by our church in reference to the baptized infant, as in reference to the baptized adult, is founded on the assumed good faith with which the engagements of the covenant are undertaken, is made specially plain, where we should expect the greatest plainness,—in her catechism for children. In that wise, though much vilified, compendium of instruction, one of the questions put in reference to baptism is, "What is required of persons to be baptized?" to which the answer returned is,—"Repentance whereby they forsake sin, and faith

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whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament." How fully this accords with what we have explained the mind of our church on this sacrament to be, we hardly need stop to remark. Springing out of this answer, the next question naturally is,—"Why, then, are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age, they cannot perform them?" to which the following answer is given,—"Because they promise them both by their sureties, which promise when they come to age themselves are bound to perform." Could words make it more plain, that the understanding on which the church welcomes the little ones to the laver of regeneration, and after that declares them to be regenerate, is their pledging themselves to repentance and faith, which pledge, it is taken for granted, they make honestly and will, when capable of doing so, redeem. What shall we say, then? When it is considered that the church receives a child

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to baptism ostensibly as the child of believing parents (for such they profess themselves to be by presenting their little one to Christ); when it is considered that to such a child special promises are given by Holy Scripture, through his faithful parents; when it is considered what strong warrant for expectation God has given to the prayer of faith,—so that we ought not to doubt but earnestly believe that what is asked faithfully for one of those towards whom Christ, when on earth, declared his good will, shall be obtained effectually;—when it is considered that the child, tacitly, if baptized in private, expressly, by his sureties, if baptized in public, commits himself to the vows of the Christian covenant, which vows the church has no right nor reason to assume that he will, when he comes of age, neglect or refuse to fulfil; when all this is fairly and fully weighed, could the church in faith and charity say less than,—"seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child is regenerate and grafted

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into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks to Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers to Him that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning?" And does it not follow consistently that she should add—"we yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant by thy Holy Spirit, to receive Him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy Holy Church?" In the entire service, she takes it for granted, that there is on the part of the child what corresponds to the good faith which she takes for granted exists in the case of the adult whom she baptizes. If her language must necessarily be understood as conditional and hypothetical in the one instance, so assuredly ought it to be in the other. Not on her, but on those who pervert and misrepresent her teaching, be the charge of an incongruity which would make her maintain, that a blessing *inevi-*

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tably accompanies the administration of baptism to *infants*, whilst she teaches that it does not *necessarily* attend the administration of the ordinance to *responsible persons*,—but only when they receive it "with faith and rightly." The rather, since she uses expressions no less strong respecting the efficacy of the sacrament in the latter, than the former case.

We are thus then prepared to state what is the real view of our church in relation to baptized infants. She looks upon them as born again until, or rather except, they give evidence to the contrary, and even then, as new-born in pledge, profession, and obligation, although they turn the privilege into a curse. Who can blame her for this view? If the child dies before he becomes accountable, who shall deny that he has entered the kingdom of God? But unless he were born again, how could he find entrance there? If the child lives to years of accountability, then the church judges

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him by his fruits. If the fruit be good, the tree must be good; if the fruit be evil, the tree must be corrupt. If the young Christian ratify and keep the covenant of grace, his baptism, as we have already had occasion to observe, verily profiteth; but if he be a breaker of the covenant, his baptism is made void; nor can he ever become partaker of the benefits which it symbolized, but by becoming partaker of the graces which it required; or in other words, without becoming a new creature in the spirit as well as in the letter. Then, indeed, baptism receives its *complement*, and all the blessings which it guaranteed are claimed and realized.

Should it still seem to any that there is somewhat of perplexity or over-confidence in the mode of expression used by our church in connexion with infant baptism, we would remind them that this was unavoidable in treating of a transaction which goes on the principle that infants are, in a certain sense, agents, and that they

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enter into engagements, their recognition and fulfilment of which must necessarily be future. Yet it is not at all difficult to picture to ourselves a near analogy in the affairs of civil life. It is quite conceivable that the sovereign of my country, influenced by good will towards me and my offspring, might offer to adopt my son, invest him with many high immunities, and secure to him a golden heritage, on condition that the child should enter into certain engagements, which when capable he should be required to perform. In such case, it would be quite reasonable in me, acting, as I would be entitled to do, for my child; satisfied that I was consulting alike his duty, his honour, and his interest, it would be quite reasonable for me to commit him to the stipulations demanded, and thus insure to him the advantages proffered. And having so done, and having all confidence in the faithfulness of the prince, and the compact having been duly witnessed and sealed, I should

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be perfectly warranted in looking upon, and speaking of my child, as the adopted of royalty, and as endued with all the immunities of the covenant into which he had been introduced. But if, when the period came that the youth should make good the engagements formed in his name, he were, either through my negligence to remain ignorant of his responsibilities, or, being informed of them, were blindly and thanklessly to repudiate them, must it not follow that the contract would be neutralized—not on the part of the monarch, who might be most gracious and faithful, but on the part of the unworthy, ungrateful, and infatuated subject of his kindness? Such an illustration is quite supposable, and the parallel which it furnishes to the case of a baptized infant as regarded by our church, is too palpable to need that we should trace it out.

The hypothetical principle, then, furnishes the key to the strong expressions used by our church in her baptismal services.

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The prayers offered up are assumed to be the prayers of faith, the engagements entered into it is assumed will be fulfilled, and on the strength of these assumptions, the child as well as the adult is spoken of as regenerated. But if, in the case of either, subsequent conduct proves that he is devoid of repentance, faith and obedience—that he "is of the devil," because "he committeth sin"—nothing can be clearer than that the church calls upon him to repent, believe and obey, in short, to become a new creature, as really as she would call upon him to do so were he an unbaptized heathen. This is abundantly manifest from many of her homilies, as it is plainly deducible from several of her articles. She does not, indeed, sanction the repetition of baptism, because there is no warrant for such repetition in Scripture, and because it is not the sealing, but the keeping of the covenant which has failed,—failed, be it remembered, not on the part of God, but on the part of unfaithful man. It

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needs not therefore, that the sacrament should be repeated, it only needs that the faithless soldier of the cross should become faithful to his oath of loyalty.

If the service for infant baptism went not on the principle which we have striven to illustrate, it would be out of harmony with all the other services of the church. For we cannot forbear reminding you again, that they all assume the spirituality and sincerity of those who use them. This is the key to the service for confirmation, to the catechism, to the office for the visitation of the sick, and to all the other formularies in the Book of Common Prayer. Nor does she in all these speak otherwise than Holy Scripture speaks, first, in relation to the circumcised, and next, in relation to the baptized. True, alas! (and we must reiterate the admission,) her discipline in connection with baptism, as well as in general, has become sadly out of keeping with her principles; but we must repeat the momentous remark, that her

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path of duty and of safety is not to lower the tone of the latter, but to raise the tone of the former. At all events, the men who framed "the Book of Common Prayer" acted on scriptural precedent, and "used a scriptural mode of expression," in speaking of the baptized person, whether baptized in infancy or in after-life, as "regenerate"—"as a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,"—for "by baptism (as it has been well expressed) they became such outwardly, if not inwardly,—professedly, if not effectually—relatively, if not really."

Did time permit, it would be easy to bring forward a host of passages from the writings of the reformers in proof that the views which have been advanced were the views which they entertained in framing our formularies. Two or three quotations must suffice. Hooper writes,—"Thus be the infants examined concerning repentance and faith, before they be baptized with water. At the contemplation

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of which faith God purgeth the soul: then is the exterior sign added, not to purge the heart, but to confirm, manifest, and open unto the world that this child is God's." Is not this what we have been arguing for, that baptism is the seal, not the source, of renewal? The testimony of Cranmer must not be passed over; he says,—"In baptism, those that come feignedly, and those that come unfeignedly, both be washed with the sacramental water; but both be not washed with the Holy Ghost and clothed with Christ." The opinion of Jewel, the great apologist for the Church of England ought not to be omitted. He declares, "True it is, the new sacraments of Christ's institution are plainer and clearer than the old, as the Gospel is plainer and clearer than the law, but the things signified are no more contained in the one than in the other." We will only add the testimony of Archbishop Whitgift; he thus expresses himself,—"It is a certain

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and true doctrine of all such as profess the gospel, that the outward signs of the sacrament do not contain in them grace, neither yet that the grace of God is of necessity tied unto them." So spake the men who had to do either with the framing or the finishing of our Prayer Book ; and is it conceivable that so speaking, they could have intended to maintain in that book, what so many contend is maintained there, *the doctrine of absolute, unconditional regeneration in baptism?*

And now, christian brethren, I feel that I have drawn largely on your patience and attention, but not, as I believe, without occasion ; for you are well aware in how much of debate, misconception, and uncertainty, the subject which I have been treating has been involved. Happy shall I be should you have so gone along with me in the line of argument and illustration which I have pursued, as that your minds may be settled in what I am persuaded are the real views of our scriptural church on

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the matter--views at which I arrived after much mental struggle, in the course of my academical career, and in which my mind has since rested with undisturbed satisfaction.

We have time but for a few short practical inferences.—And, first, let us stand fast in the assurance that our church is guiltless of the perilous tenet, that all receive the grace of regeneration who receive the sacrament of regeneration. However it may be held by some of her sons, and however they may assert that she holds it, —herself being the judge,—the charge is false. She maintains that the sacraments are effectual only when "rightly received," and that they are rightly received only when received with repentance and faith; —repentance and faith in exercise, in the case of an adult,—in pledge, in prospect, or at most, in embryo, in the case of a child. Can it then be said that she countenances any of her ministers in upholding views, which must hinder them from ad-

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dressing their hearers with closeness and discrimination; and which must deter them from calling upon the ungodly Gentiles, because duly baptized,—as the prophets, and after them the apostles, called upon the ungodly Jews, however duly circumcised,—to make them a clean heart and a right spirit;—to repent, believe, and live. Surely the ministry that deals not in such language, is fitted to foster perilous delusion and to take away its edge from the sword of the Spirit.

At the same time, it behoves us to beware that we do not disparage the Holy Sacrament of Christ: let us not forget that it is a divine instrument, as well as a lively sign, of spiritual blessing, conveying manifold gifts of grace to the meet recipient. To the devout parent, also, it is a precious privilege to be thus allowed to consecrate his little one to Christ, and to witness the touching symbol which avouches the good will of Christ towards the lamb committed to His bosom. And

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should that babe be cut down as a flower in the bud, with how much confidence may the parents write upon its tomb,—"Of such is the kingdom of God;" or, should that child grow up beneath their watchful care, with how much force may they urge upon *him* the obligations of his Christian covenant, whilst they plead with *God* the promises which that covenant assured to their son. Far be it from us to think lightly of baptism; nay, verily, what is needed is, that all who dedicate their offspring to the Saviour in this most gracious ordinance, should do it more reverently, more earnestly, more believingly,—that all ministers and congregations of faithful, in the presence of whom the ordinance is celebrated, should ask, and seek, and knock, with all unity and faith; and that the teaching and training of the youth on whom "holiness to the Lord" has been thus inscribed, should be carried on and carried out constantly, prayerfully, consistently:—*this is what is wanted;* and

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were all this secured, how frequently should we see manifested in the rising generation, the inward and spiritual grace of baptism,—even "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness!"

For yourselves, beloved, suffer us to conjure you that you do not cushion yourselves in false security on the fact of your baptism. Take heed that you do not arrogate its privileges, whilst you slight its engagements: remember how great the responsibility which it involved. Baptism is a blessing, an exceeding great and precious blessing, if you keep the covenant which it ratified; but otherwise, it will only avail to enhance your guilt and deepen your damnation. Remember, you cannot perish as the heathen perishes; should you perish, you must perish *as a Christian*,—as one who was pledged and assumed to be regenerate; as a deserter from the Cross the sign of which was traced upon your brow; and of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall such an one be

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thought worthy? Would not the water of baptism prove as a mist of darkness on his face, and the sign of the Cross as a burning brand on his forehead, through everlasting ages? Turn not then the privilege of God into licentiousness, but use it, on the one hand, as a mighty incentive to devotedness, and on the other, as a blessed instrument of encouragement. The sacraments of Christ are undying witnesses and expressive signs that he will most surely keep and perform his promises to such as call upon him—to all such as call upon him in truth. The God of all grace and consolation, of His infinite mercy, grant that all we who have received the sacraments of his grace, may enjoy the very grace which those sacraments symbolise; that so, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, we may have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life!

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SERMON X.

SIN AFTER BAPTISM.

1 JOHN ii. 1, 2.—"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Whilst truth is simple, error is manifold. He who errs on one point of doctrine can hardly fail to err upon others. Each link in the chain of heretical opinion draws after it another; so that when once a man diverges from truth, there is no saying to what extent he shall be en-

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tangled. The eye of his soul becomes evil, the moral vision oblique, and the whole body full of darkness. But if the light that is in him be darkness, if that which he takes for truth be falsehood, that which he holds to be from the Father of Lights be in reality from the father of lies, how great is that darkness; how fearful the results which are likely to follow! So has it been in the downward course of those misguided men whose opinions we have felt called upon thus publicly to denounce. Setting out from one or two distorted and exaggerated principles, they have gradually and stealthily advanced from one false step to another, until they have developed notions, and reached a depth of heresy, which it is only charitable to suppose they would have shuddered to contemplate in the outset of their devious career. We have already seen how prodigiously they magnify a duly commissioned ministry, and with what astounding powers they would invest it:

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we have seen also how, in pursuance of this erroneous view, they attach to baptism, when celebrated by such a ministry, an enormous and unscriptural efficacy. Akin to this error, and springing out of it, is the mournful and mischievous figment which we have undertaken to put into the crucible, on the present occasion,—that sin committed after baptism is unpardonable, or at least all but beyond the reach of pardon. Astounding notion! which if bound upon us by our church must close the lips of her ministers from preaching repentance and remission of sins to their people; a notion so palpably in the face of the Church and of that Gospel of which she is a pillar and ground, that nothing but the blinding and bewitching force of error can account for its having been embraced and avowed by serious, earnest, intelligent, and, we would fain hope, sincerely-meaning men.

In following out our discourse, we shall first lay before you a short summary of

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the notions which modern innovators have broached upon the subject under discussion; and we shall then show you how utterly those notions are in the face of Holy Scripture and of the Church. May the blessing of God Almighty rest upon us the while!

In the first place, then, give attention to the sentiments of one who passes for the oracle of the Tractarian school. "We have," (he writes) "no account in Scripture of any second remission, obliteration, extinction of all sin, such as is bestowed on us by the one baptism for the remission of sins."* The fountain has been indeed opened to wash away sin and uncleanness, but we dare not promise them a second time the same easy access to it which they once had, that way is open but once; it were to abuse the power of the keys entrusted to us, again to pretend to admit them thus; now there remains only the baptism of tears; a bap-

* Tract 68, p. 54.

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tism obtained, as the same fathers said, with much fasting and with many prayers:"* yet even thus it would appear, doubtfully, if at all, attained. For we are told by the same author,—"We are then washed once for all in his blood; if we again sin, there remaineth no more such complete ablution in this life. We must bear the scars of the sins which we have committed. We must be judged according to our deeds?"† To the same effect this writer expresses himself in another pamphlet,—"There are but two periods of absolute cleansing, baptism, and the day of judgment."‡

And are these the glad tidings of great joy which we have in charge for "every creature."* And is baptism, indeed, such a yoke,—too heavy to be borne? If such were the case with the baptized, better for a man never to receive baptism, or, at

* Tract 68, p. 59. † Ib. p. 68.
‡ Letter to Bishop of Oxford, p. 93.

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least, not to receive it, like some in early times, till his dying hour.

In proof of the unwarrantableness of the startling opinions which are thus foisted upon us, as though taught by Scripture and the Church, let it be remembered that there is no baptized person who has come to years of responsibility that never falls into sin: consequently, if the Tractarian scheme be true, there is no baptized adult who is not lost, or at most of whose salvation we can be sure. Sinless perfection is not admitted by Holy Scripture as the attribute of any man on earth. On the contrary, the wise man declares, "there is not a just man that liveth and sinneth not." And again, in his sublime prayer, he acknowledges, "There is no man that sinneth not." In like manner, St. James says of himself and his fellow-Christians, "in many things we offend all." So the beloved disciple asserts in relation to believers,—"If we say that we have no sin,"—not that we *had* no sin, but that we *have* no sin,

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" we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Strong as is this language, he afterwards adds still more strongly,—" If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." These statements by St. John claim special note, because there are other declarations in the same epistle, which seem to countenance opposite views, and are commonly brought forward in support of such views. Thus he says,—" Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." And again,—" Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." On the face of these passages it might be thought that they are irreconcileable with those before adduced. But bearing in mind that we must not, as our Church decides, " so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another;" knowing that the Holy Spirit must always be in har-

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mony with himself;—let us look more closely at the two classes of statement in their context and bearing. We shall then perceive at once that the drift of the Apostle in the former passages, is different from his drift in the latter. In those he is combating self-righteousness, and enforcing our perpetual need of the blood which "cleanseth us from all sin;" in these he is beating down antinomianism, and asserting that deliverance from the dominion of sin is inseparable from deliverance out of its guilt: consequently, in the one case, he speaks of sinning as the exception to the general course and tenor of the life, as occasional, and through infirmity; in the other as the rule and practice of the man—as wilful and habitual. Thus understood, the apostle's meaning is alike clear, decisive, and consistent.

In consonance with the view we have taken, the apostle Paul does not urge upon believers that they should not let sin *exist*, but that they should not let "sin *reign*,

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in their mortal bodies;" the task assigned them is not to annihilate their in-dwelling foe, but to keep him under, and bring him into subjection. Even of himself he declares,—"I find then a law, that when I would do good evil is present with me." And when he was become "such an one as Paul the aged," and "also a prisoner of Jesus Christ," when he had fought a good fight and finished his course, and kept the faith;" so far was he from deeming himself faultless, that he testified, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom *I am* chief." But was he therefore doubtful of his acceptance with God? Did he expect that he should *hardly* enter heaven? Nay, verily, he exclaimed,—"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."

But the direct as well as the indirect testimony of Scripture is wholly opposed

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to the figment with which we are dealing. To the voice of the Old Testament we need do little more than refer. In the opening of the prophecy of Isaiah, God first upbraids His people in this thrilling manner, —"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah! sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers." How sad their state! How fearful their guilt! Yet how does God next address them? Does he cut off all hope? Does he cast them away for ever? Hearken to the voice of His grace; "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Here is no grudging offer of mercy, no niggard promise of pardon. But all this

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was spoken to the circumcised, not to the baptized. What, then, is grace less free and abundant under the gospel than it was under the law? Was the dim dispensation richer in forgiveness than is the glorious dispensation of light and truth? It cannot be. Yet where is the surpassing glory of the ministration of life, if the baptized Christian stands in a sevenfold worse condition than stood the circumcised Jew? —if the one had ample place for repentance when he had fallen into sin; whilst the other has no room left for repentance, at least has no open door to his father's house, unless it be the back-door of "the baptism of tears?" Or, (shall we add,) a terrific access through purgatorial flames lengthened out to the day of judgment, when alone, besides the period of baptism, is there complete absolution from guilt!"

If we turn to the New Testament, evidence against the fond notion which we are disproving, meets us on every hand.

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The Lord Jesus, when he taught his disciples how to pray, commanded them to say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us;" and this they are to ask duly as they ask their "daily bread." Did he then bid them crave what they shall not receive; or is man more ready to pardon than our Father which is in heaven? God forbid! Again, when Christ washed the feet of his disciples, and intimated the mystic meaning of the act, he said, "He that is washed needeth not *save to wash his feet;* but is clean every whit." Thus he indicated that whilst the justified need not to be justified anew, they still need fresh ablution from the imperfections of their walk and conversation. To the same effect is the testimony of St. John,—"If," says he, "we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth (not *has* cleansed, but still *cleanseth*) us from all sin." It is clear, then, that those who "walk in the light and have fellow-

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ship one with another," yet need to be cleansed and are still cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. So he tells us again in the passage already quoted in part. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How emphatical! He is not simply merciful and gracious, but "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us,"—not partially and imperfectly,—but "from *all* unrighteousness." True, the same apostle says,—"These things write I unto you, that ye sin not;" urging us to shun every transgression, yet he does not shut the door against the transgressor, but adds, —"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." Suffice it to add the closing words of the Epistle of St. James,—"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that

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he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

From the *declarations* of Scripture, let us pass to some of the beautiful *examples* of mercy towards the backslider which it holds forth. In the Old Testament, how touching the case of Ephraim as depicted in the prophecy of Jeremiah; God is represented as hearkening to the wailings of the penitent transgressor,—"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus,—Thou hast chastised me, I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after I was turned, I repented, and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth!" So did the mourner in Zion bewail himself; and how did the Lord regard his sorrow? "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him,

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I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." What shall we say of the instance of Manasseh, who had filled Jerusalem with idolatry and blood; yet when from the depths of his dungeon he cried unto God, he found mercy, recovered his throne, and closed his days in peace? Was not he a pattern of the long-suffering of the Lord? And what shall we say of David? How fearfully he fell needs not to be told; how marvellously he was forgiven, let his own harp tell in the thirty-second Psalm,—"When I kept silence my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long, (for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me,) my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." What could be more sovereign? What more

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free? "I confessed, and thou forgavest." David said unto Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." Chastisement indeed, and rebuke he must undergo, but his soul shall be delivered.

In the New Testament, memorials of mercy towards the erring children of God are neither few nor inexpressive. Look at the picture of the penitent prodigal. From his father's house he had wandered; his father's goods he had wasted in riotous living; he had clothed himself with rags, and covered himself with shame; but when "he arose to go unto his father, whilst he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." "And the father said to his servants, Bring hither the best robe and put it upon him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for

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this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." No remark of ours would do aught but take away from the force of this pathetic picture. Who can gaze upon it, and yet entertain for a moment the notion that God is not prompt to pardon a contrite child, that he will not "spare him as a man spareth his own son that serveth him!"

In the history of St. Peter we have the picture realized. After he had denied his master with oaths and curses; denied him at a juncture, and under circumstances, the most aggravating, he was not left without room for repentance,—without ray of hope, or voice of assurance;—no! when Jesus after his resurrection spake to the women, He said, with a peculiar emphasis,—"Go, and tell my disciples, *and Peter*, that I am risen." It was not without a special reason that Peter was thus singled out and designated. His Master knew the anguish of his heart, and his

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bowels yearned to bind up the broken spirit. And though afterwards he probed the mourner's wounds,—for whom he loves he rebukes and chastens—it was not to rob him of his hope, but to assure his trembling heart. "Feed my sheep!—Feed my lambs!" these blessed charges were to the penitent apostle at once tests of his fidelity and seals of his forgiveness.

In the after history of St. Peter we meet with a very peculiar instance of wickedness which serves wonderfully to manifest the extent of Divine mercy. It is to the case of Simon Magus we refer. Immediately after his baptism by the Apostle, he was guilty of a profaneness well-nigh amounting to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, yet, whilst the Apostle denounced him as being "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," he did not shut the door of hope even against him, but desperate as was his condition, added, "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may

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be forgiven thee." Is not this resistless evidence how much richer in mercy is the God of all grace than many of those who profess to be his messengers believe and represent Him to be?

No less striking is the way in which St. Paul acted in reference to the incestuous member of the church at Corinth whom he denounced as guilty of "such fornication as was not so much as named among the Gentiles," and whom he called upon the church unsparingly to excommunicate. For in his second epistle, we find him earnestly solicitous to restore and comfort the excommunicated, but now repentant, backslider. He tells the brethren, "Contrariwise, ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him." More touchingly than language could express do all these examples tell that there is forgiveness with God that

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He might be feared; they are vivid commentaries on the words of God to his people of old,—"Return, O backsliding daughter, and I will heal thy backsliding; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." And shall we dare to be less free in holding forth pardon to the chief of sinners on his true repentance, than the great God has been in proclaiming it by the gospel of His dear Son?

Enough, then, and more than enough, of proof has been adduced from Holy Scripture to show how rash, unsupported, and monstrous the position, that we have no warrant for saying that sin after baptism can be forgiven. Turn we now to our Church, and let us hearken to her voice on this subject. Attend, in the first place, to her services, drawn up, be it borne in mind, for the use of the baptized, and none but the baptized. On the principle which we are combating, they ought to contain no exhortations to repentance, no acknowledgments of transgression, no

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assurances of forgiveness. What room for these, if, after baptism, a man cannot sin, or does not sin, or, if he sins, has no door of pardon and penitence left? How opposite to all this the tone and spirit of our Liturgy. It is hard to conceive any degree of fatuity which can blind a man to this fact. In our daily services, divine worship begins with a selection of scriptural passages, the most pathetic in their persuasiveness to repentance, the richest in the promises of forgiveness. In full accordance with these is the exhortation which follows; and in the confession which comes next in order, and which is appointed "to be said of the whole congregation, after the minister, all kneeling," every worshipper is taught to acknowledge that "he has erred and strayed from his Father's ways like a lost sheep—that he has followed too much the devices and desires of his own heart—that he has offended against God's holy laws—that he has left undone those things which he ought to

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have done, and done those things which he ought not to have done, and that there is no health in him." Is this the language of a man who has no iniquity to bewail? Can a sinless man use it without sinning fearfully in the use of it, for he comes with a lie upon his lips before God? And what follows the general confession? —the accents of despair?—the voice of upbraiding?—the thunders of Sinai?—No, but the "absolution or remission of sins," wherein the priest declares, "that Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins, and that he pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel." Here is no hesitancy in the proclamation of pardon, no reserve of mercy, no crippling and clogging the grace of God with the supplements of men, with penance, or purgatory, or vo-

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luntary humility. What shall we more say? The time would fail us to dwell on the yearning pleading for mercy with which our matchless Litany begins, or the no less pathetic reiteration of the cry, "Spare us, good Lord!" with which it proceeds; neither can we enlarge on what may be styled the holiest of our services, —the service for the administration of the Lord's Supper. We would only remind you that here even those who are supposed to come to the feast in the wedding garment required by God in holy Scripture, are yet taught to say, "We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us; we do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us; have mercy upon

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us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past." The absolution which follows, and the testimonies from Holy Scripture brought forward to enforce it, are equally expressive,—but we forbear.

If from the formularies we turn to the Articles of the Church, we shall find *these* bearing a testimony no less unequivocal than *those*. In the fifteenth Article, "Of Christ alone without Sin," it is stated, "But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And in her sixteenth Article, "Of Sin after Baptism," she anticipates and denounces the very heresy we are handling; "Not every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism, is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable; wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy

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Ghost we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again and amend our lives; and therefore they are to be condemned which say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent." How passing strange that after subscribing to this Article, any man could broach the notions which we have been exposing!

We cannot bring ourselves to close this appeal to the testimony of the Church, without selecting two or three of the uncompromising statements with which the Homilies abound. In the sermon, "Of the Salvation of Mankind by only Christ our Saviour from Sin and Death Everlasting," it is declared,—"They which in act or deed do sin after baptism when they turn again to God unfeignedly, they are likewise washed by this sacrifice from their sins in such sort that there remaineth not any spot that shall be imputed to their damnation." Again, in the Homily, "Of

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Repentance and of true reconciliation unto God," we have the very figment which we are disproving, thus denounced: "Whereupon we do not without a just cause detest and abhor the damnable opinion of them which do most wickedly go about to persuade the simple and ignorant people, that if we chance after we be once come to God and grafted in his Son Jesus Christ to fall into some horrible sin, repentance shall be unprofitable unto us, there is no more hope of reconciliation, or to be received again into the favour and mercy of God. And that they may give the better colour unto their pestilent and pernicious error, they do commonly bring in the sixth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the second chapter of the second Epistle of Peter, not considering t hatin those places the holy Apostles do not speak of the daily falls that we, as long as we carry about this body of sin, are subject unto; (Matt. xii., Mark iii.,) but of the final falling away from Christ and His

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Gospel which is a sin against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven, because that they that do utterly forsake the known truth, do hate Christ and his word, they do crucify and mock Him (but to their utter destruction,) and therefore fall into desperation, and cannot repent. And that this is the true meaning of the Holy Spirit of God it appeareth by many other places of the Scriptures, which promise unto all true repentant sinners, and to them that with their whole heart do turn unto the Lord their God, free pardon and remission of their sins." Subsequently, as if to shut out every cavil, and shut up every door of evasion, it is added, after the quotation of various promises from the Old Testament, "It is most evident and plain that these things ought to be understood of them that were with the Lord afore, and by their sins and wickednesses were gone away from him. For we do not turn again unto him with whom we were never before, but we come unto him.

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Now, unto all them that will return unfeignedly unto the Lord their God, the favour and mercy of God unto forgiveness of sins is liberally offered.

"Whereby it followeth necessarily, that although we do, after we be once come to God and grafted in His Son Jesus Christ, fall into great sins, (for there is no righteous man upon the earth that sinneth not;) and "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" yet if we rise again by repentance, and with a full purpose of amendment of life, do flee unto the mercy of God, taking sure hold thereupon, through faith in his Son Jesus Christ, there is an assured and infallible hope of pardon and remission of the same, and that we shall be received again into the favour of our Heavenly Father."

More we need not add to show how utterly guiltless the church is of the heretical notion which some who call themselves her children presume to propagate within her pale. From that pale common

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honesty ought, one would imagine, to have ere now driven them. In Rome they will find a congenial element for their theories, because hierarchical domination being the great drift and end of her whole system, whatever tends to increase the difficulties in the way of salvation must proportionately aggrandise the clerical order in whose hands are placed the entire machinery for meeting those difficulties. The free sovereign method of salvation, which constitutes the essence of the gospel, makes the people far too dependent on Christ, and far too independent of Christ's ministers, to suit the purposes of Rome. No marvel, then, that she should mystify, adulterate, and encumber the gospel. Nor could any dogma be more to her purpose than that which we have been exposing; for let it once be admitted that the man who sins after baptism has hardly any room for repentance or prospect of pardon, so that he must seek it by "the baptism of tears, by

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a life of humiliation, doubtfulness, and dread, and that after all, his hope of deliverance is suspended on priestly absolution,"—let all this be admitted, and where is the baptized man, actuated by any earnestness of piety, who would not be, to an untold extent, the passive and plastic slave of the men who are looked upon as holding the keys, and as opening and shutting the kingdom of heaven?

Practically and personally, brethren, let us draw the conclusion, that on the one hand we ought not to despair, on the other we must not presume. To presume because the riches of Divine grace are unsearchable, is to make Christ the minister of sin, and to elevate His cross on the ruins of his throne. If you are taught of God, you dare not do so. Instead of arguing, "Let us sin that grace may abound," you will rather argue, "Let us shun sin even as hell, because grace *hath* abounded." In proportion as you see that God is slow to anger, will you be anxious not to pro-

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voke his wrath. In proportion as you discern the freeness with which he forgives you, will you be constrained not to forgive yourselves. And the more you are assured that he is pacified towards you, the more implacable will be your hatred towards your own offences. And let it never be forgotten, that except the backslider repent and return, he can have no forgiveness, and that even when forgiven, God will make him taste what an evil and bitter thing it is to depart from the living God, and will so bring it about that his own backslidings shall correct him. Look at the example of David. If he, the man after God's own heart, stands out a monument of mercy, that no fallen saint might despair, he stands forth also, in his sorrows and his chastisement, a memorial of the fatherly severity of God, that no saint that standeth might presume. Can we contemplate *his* case, or the case of Jacob, or the case of Hezekiah, or the case of Peter, and not tremblingly exclaim, " Be-

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hold the goodness and severity of God!" If, however, presumption is without shadow of excuse, despair is not a whit more excusable; the whole gospel represents God in the attitude of mercy, as waiting to be gracious to every one that cometh to him by Christ. It is this that makes the gospel effectual to repentance; there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared,—despair seals up the soul in impenitency. Repentance springs from the hope of pardon. There can be no repentance because there is no hope in hell. It is mercy that melts the heart of stone. Terror only hardens it. God be praised, therefore, now and for ever, that we may still address to the people of God, even after they have transgressed, the most tender, persuasive, and pathetic, words which God addressed to His erring people in the days of old, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him,

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Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips. Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods; for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him, I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

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SERMON XI.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 Cor. x. 15, 16.—I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say, The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of Christ?

How happy for the church were there no need of controversy! How fatal were controversy to cease whilst it is needed! Peace with error is perfidy to truth, and wherever truth is vital she must be aggressive. As infallibly as light must struggle with darkness, so infallibly must truth contend against heresy. Yet, whilst maintaining the duty of controversy, we cannot but bewail, deeply and sadly bewail, that

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necessity should have arisen for it, not only in connexion with subjects and institutions of a less sacred character, but that there is no subject so awful, no ordinance so holy, that it has not been made an arena for contention. Would that the conflict of opinion could at least have been kept in the outer courts of the temple, and had never been forced into the holy of Holies—violating the ark, the shechinah, and the mercy-seat, filling with din and tumult that mystic enclosure which ought never to be trodden but with unshod foot, —in calmness, in meekness, and in awe. Who amongst us, feeling as he ought to feel, but must sympathize in these sentiments, whilst we turn our minds this evening to the last touching ordinance of Christ, —so calm, so solemn, so tender, so endearing,—and feel that we are constrained to approach the subject in the attitude of controversy and the spirit of godly jealousy? But necessity is laid upon us, yea, woe is unto us if we do not shield the

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institution of our Lord from the attempts which are being insidiously made by professed members and ministers of our own church, to deform the holy supper with some of the worst heresies of Rome. Still, while pursuing the unwelcome task, let us lift up our hearts in prayer to God, that he would enable us to do it in such wise as befits the solemn theme,—reverently, subduedly, dispassionately.

Taking the simple, beautiful description of the Lord's Supper which we have read to you from the Epistle to the Corinthians, as the groundwork of our discourse, we shall begin by giving you specimens of the dangerous notions which the Tractarian school have propagated on the subject; we shall afterwards exemplify the views of the Word of God and of the Church of England in contradistinction to those notions.

On the subject before us, even more closely than on most others, do the writers whom we are opposing, symbolize with Rome. Her chief errors in relation to

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the Holy Eucharist are threefold. The first regards the elements, which she holds to be transmuted or transubstantiated by the act of consecration into the real flesh and blood of the Redeemer, yea, into the entire Saviour, body, soul, and divinity. The second regards the nature of the ordinance, which she holds to be a true and effectual, though "unbloody," sacrifice for sin, a perpetual repetition of the sacrifice of the Cross. The last respects the reverence due to the consecrated elements, which she holds to be nothing less than the fullest adoration, as to the present and incarnate Deity. The latter opinion the Tractarian divines have very sparingly, if at all, adopted, or at least, avowed: the two former they seem to have decidedly, though still in a disguised and subtle manner, embraced and propounded.

The first of these they put forward cautiously. They of course divest it of the grossness with which Romanism has clothed it. Indeed, they throw around it

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so much of mist and mystery, that it is hard to say how far they go. It may, however, be fully collected from their writings, that they maintain that the elements undergo a positive change; that they convey the body and blood of Christ; and that there is a real presence of Christ in the Holy Supper. In the 90th Tract we are assured that our article, "in denying a mutatio panis et vini, does not deny every kind of change."* Another writer asserts that "antiquity continually affirms a change in the sacred elements," but if there is a change in the elements, what is that change? And into what are they changed? A change of the elements,—of character and purpose,—so that they are no longer common bread and wine, but bread and wine set apart for the holy purpose of representing the body and blood of Christ, is not for a moment denied; but this cannot be what is meant by a change *in* the elements; nor do these divines lead us to suppose that such

* Tract 90, p. 51.

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is their meaning, for they tell us that it is "*literally* true" that "the consecrated bread is Christ's body," so that there is, "a real, superlocal presence in the Holy Sacrament?"* Consequently, they speak of the Eucharist, as well as of baptism, as involving something miraculous. For instance, we find the following language in one of the later tracts; "If Balaam's ass instructed Balaam, what is there fairly to startle us in the church's doctrine, that the water of baptism cleanses from sin, that eating the consecrated bread is eating his body? If baptism be the cleansing and quickening of the dead soul, to say nothing of the Lord's supper, they (the ministers) do work miracles."† So, in a much earlier number of the series, it is asserted of the clergy, that to them is intrusted the awful and mysterious privilege of making the body and blood of Christ. And as if all this were not strong enough, we have a still more astounding developement

* Tract 90, p. 58. † Tract 85, p. 90, 95.

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in one of the last of the course. Speaking of alterations in the catechism, the writer says,—"such a providential insertion respecting the Eucharist may be contrasted with the no less happy omission of an half ambiguous expression against the real and essential presence of Christ's natural body and blood at the communion, which found its way into Edward's second book." We are further informed by one of the writers already quoted, "We believe the doctrine of our church to be that in the communion there is a true, real, actual though spiritual communication of the body and blood of Christ to the believer through the holy elements:"* and of this gift, though received only by the believing, we are afterwards assured, that,—"It is there independently of our faith."* True, they ostentatiously repudiate the ugly word "transubstantiation;" but that their sympathies are with Rome on the tenet they cannot disguise. Thus, in

* Dr. Pusey's Letter, p. 128.

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the letter already quoted it is avowed,—"Rome, in this respect, *has the truth*, though mingled with error, and clouded and injured by it: the Zuingli-Calvinist school have *forfeited it*. In a word, our church holds with Rome the reality of the communication of the body and blood of Christ through the holy Eucharist, but denies her carnal way of explaining it?" Still more flagrantly does another author betray his hankering after the heresy of Rome in this matter, when speaking of what he no less absurdly than inaccurately designates, "St. Peter's Liturgy," (alias the Mass Book,) he says,—"At the time of the Reformation we, in common with all the west, possessed the rite of the Roman church, or St. Peter's Liturgy." "This *sacred* and *most precious* monument, then, of the apostles, our Reformers received whole and entire from their predecessors, and they *mutilated* the tradition of 1,500

* Dr. Pusey's Letter, p. 144.

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years."* It appears, then, that on the subject of transubstantiation the views of these unhappy writers, however distinguished from those of Trent in word, are in spirit essentially the same.

In relation to the nature of the ordinance, as involving a sacrifice no less than a communion, they again, to a great extent, make common cause with Rome. Indeed, this error is the offspring of the former. In one of the Tracts the doctrine of the primitive church on this point, as deduced and adopted by the Tractarian school, is thus stated:—"In the Eucharist, an oblation or sacrifice was made by the church to God, under the form of His creatures, of bread and wine, according to our Blessed Lord's holy institution, in memory of His cross and passion:" and this they believed to be the "pure offering" or sacrifice which the Prophet Malachi foretold that the Gentiles should offer; and that it was enjoined by our

* Newman's Letter to Dr. Faussett, p. 46.

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Lord in the words,—Do this for a memorial of Me; that it was alluded to when our Lord or St. Paul speak of a christian altar, and was typified by the Passover, which was both a sacrifice and a feast upon a sacrifice."* To the same effect it is afterwards added,—"The communion was (to use a modern phrase) the feast upon the sacrifice thus offered: they first offered to God His gifts, in commemoration of that His inestimable gift, and placed them upon His altar here, to be received and presented on the heavenly altar by Him, our high-priest, and then trusted to receive them back, conveying the life-giving body and blood."† In accordance with this, the Eucharist is spoken of as a "tremendous mystery," "an awful unbloody sacrifice, an impetratory sacrifice," "a propitiatory sacrifice."‡ In like manner, the word table is set aside for the word altar, and the word priest is interpreted as sig-

* Tract 81, pp. 4, 5.

† Tract 81, p. 6. ‡ Brit. Cri. July 1841, p. 24.

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nifying a sacrificer, rather than a presbyter. On the whole, therefore, in their views on this point, there is no very broad line between them and Trent,—indeed they themselves admit as much, for when the writer of the Tract from which we have chiefly quoted, proceeds to treat of the Romish doctrine as compared with our own, he represents the difference as lying merely in this, that in the mass Christ is as truly and really sacrificed as he was upon the cross, "that Christ himself is again offered." The writer himself therefore being the judge, he holds that in all beside, we are on this point at one with Rome.

As it respects the adoration of the elements, our Anglo-Romish divines can hardly be said to have committed themselves. Yet their tendencies towards this consummation of the heresy have not been wholly concealed. For though unavowed in words, they have been indicated by actions—a language oftentimes more expres-

* Tract 68, p. 59.

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sive than that of the lips. Why else their surpassing reverence for the chancel of the church? Why else their frequent and solemn genuflexions towards the communion-table, as though the Deity were specially there? Will it be said that it is towards the east they bow? Not so! For they do the same when the table stands not eastward. Is it not then that they associate with the table the consecrated elements, and that to these their homage is paid?

Not, however, to pursue these painful illustrations any further, we proceed at once to satisfy your minds that neither scripture nor our church gives any countenance to such heretical notions. And first, of the change in the elements, and of the real presence of Christ as conveyed through *them* to the believing communicant and as existing in them "independently of our faith." The very passage specially relied upon by Rome and those who approximate to her, the words used by our blessed Lord when instituting the

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Holy Supper, furnish decisive witness against the dogma of transubstantiation; for when Christ said of the bread, "this is my body," and of the wine, "this is my blood," it is clear as the light of heaven that he could not have intended that he held his body and blood in his own hand, and it is impossible his disciples could have so understood him. But if there was no change in the elements in the first instance, there can be no ground for inferring any change in subsequent instances. If the Saviour's language must of necessity be regarded as figurative, *then*, on what principle can it be regarded as otherwise *now?* How obvious is it, therefore, that the mode of expression employed by Christ was no more than a striking way of representing the sign as the thing signified; a form of expression so common among the Jews that they were in little danger of misapprehending it. They frequently designated the symbol as the thing symbolized, instead of saying that it represented

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or stood for the object. As strengthening the view thus given, we would remind you that our Lord distinctly spake of the wine which he had declared to be His blood, as "the fruit of the vine." Saint Paul, in treating of the Holy Communion, no less explicitly calls one of the elements bread after consecration. Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. In like manner he says in the passage on which this discourse is founded, "the bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It follows, therefore, that whatever blessed communion or participation of Christ there is in the Holy Sacrament, it does not result from any change in the elements themselves. Yea, it may be said with reverence, that the very sin of the Corinthians was overruled for the refutation of the gross notion we are combating, for they are charged by the Apostle with having some of them been drunken with the sacramental wine.

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That the participation of the Saviour, designed in the Holy Communion, must be understood to be a spiritual participation is made still more manifest by another notable passage in Saint Paul's Epistles:— "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils, ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils." The twofold antithesis here requires that we should understand the antithetical clauses in the same sense; but nothing can be plainer than that the former clause cannot be understood literally, and therefore neither must the latter be so understood. To these proofs, we would merely add a few out of the many expressions in the New Testament which testify that the Lord is corporally absent from us. "Me," says the Saviour, "ye have not always." And again, "I leave the world and go to the Father." But even the catechism of the Council of Trent teaches that "when a body moves from a place it ceases to be there." How then can the Redeemer at one and the

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same time be bodily in heaven, and bodily in the Eucharist? This argument, so fatal to the figment of transubstantiation, is equally fatal to those more subtilized forms of the heresy which veil themselves under such equivocal expressions as "a real superlocal presence," and "a presence in the elements, independently of faith." If such expressions mean anything more than a spiritual presence, they must mean a corporal; and if a corporal,—then how little is the heresy they teach removed from that of Rome! A spiritual presence, a *special* spiritual presence — Scripture teaches, and we devoutly hold. And is not this in the truest sense a *real* presence? For are not things spiritual as real as things physical? "The flesh," says Christ, "profiteth nothing, it is the Spirit that quickeneth. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Having thus lent an ear to the voice of *Scripture* on the subject we are treating; proceed we now to hearken to the accents

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of our church. These we shall find to be clear and unequivocal. That the consecrated elements are regarded by her as having undergone no substantive change, is taught emphatically in a memorable paragraph annexed to the communion service. "Lest, (it is said in reference to the posture of the communicants at the holy table,) the same kneeling should by any persons, either out of ignorance and infirmity or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved: it is hereby declared, that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine thereby bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substance, and therefore may not be adored; (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians,) and the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the

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truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one." Thank God, for a testimony so explicit! With equal clearness our church teaches that the communion of Christ's body and blood which we enjoy in the Lord's Supper, is a spiritual communion. Thus, in her catechism it is asked, "What is the inward part or thing signified?" And the answer is,—"The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." By the faithful, not by the faithless; therefore, not present, "independently of the faith" of the communicant. Still more clearly does she set forth the same truth in her exquisite form for the administration of the elements,—"the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart, by faith with thanksgiving." These words of surpassing pathos and

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beauty are as clear as they are devout. It is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not the hallowed bread, which is to preserve the body and soul of the recipient. We are to feed upon Him, indeed, but where? In our heart; and how? "By faith with thanksgiving." Spiritually, therefore, not carnally;—internally in the heart, not externally with the mouth; by the operation of faith, not by sensible participation. Thus are we nourished and strengthened by the blessed fruition of life through Christ's death, and of salvation through Christ's blood; and this is spirit and this is life.

In the office for the Communion of the Sick, our church's view of the spiritual participation of Christ in the Eucharist is brought out with admirable distinctness. Annexed to the office we have the following rubric,—"But if a man, either by reason of extremity of sickness, or for want of warning in due time to the curate, or for lack of company to receive with

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him, or by any other just impediment, do not receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, the curate shall instruct him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed His blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving Him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the sacrament with His mouth." It would be difficult to express more explicitly the spiritual nature of our participation of the body and blood of Christ, as distinct from—though to the faithful always accompanying—the signs which we receive with our mouth.

In the Articles we find the same sentiments strongly set forth. Of the Supper of the Lord it is asserted,—" that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a

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partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." The reality and verity of our fruition of the crucified Saviour in His own ordinance, is, you see, strenuously maintained; but in what way, and on what condition, do we partake of Him? If we "rightly, worthily, and with faith" receive the elements. The state of the recipient is therefore the vital point. Without the faith and preparation of the heart, the sacrament, however duly administered, and however by ministers duly commissioned, profiteth not,—yea, rather, it increaseth condemnation. So is it laid down in the twenty-ninth Article. "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in nowise are they partakers of Christ; but, rather to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing."

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In the homilies we have the mind of the church still more fully expressed on this momentous point; but enough has been adduced to vindicate our church from the insinuation that she holds that there is any change in the elements: or that there is in the holy communion any reception of the body and blood of Christ other than after a spiritual sort and through the operation of faith.

Springing out of the error which we have thus tested, is the kindred error which converts the sacramental supper into an awful sacrifice;—"a sacrifice," as one of the Tractarians styles it, "for the living and the dead." It is true that they are shy of the more startling language of Rome on this subject, and do not speak of the Eucharist as an actual and expiatory sacrifice, but rather as a commemorative one, in which the bread and wine are presented before God as memorials of the death of his Son. Nevertheless, they do not hesitate to speak of the offering as "propitiatory," as bring

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ing down blessings on the Church at large; yea, as exerting some mysterious salutary influence even on the unseen world. How thin the partition between these views and those of Rome we need hardly remind you. But where, let us ask, do they find the shadow of authority for such notions in the Word of God? Where in the threefold narrative of the institution of the Holy Supper given us by the evangelists? Where in the subsequent account received through immediate revelation by St. Paul? Is there a word, a hint, about the simple feast being in reality an awful sacrifice? The most ingenious sophistry has tried in vain to wring any such intimation from the artless records. But more than this, the notion which we are denouncing is not merely without warrant in Scripture; it is in the face of Scripture testimony; it is at variance with all those strong and repeated assertions of the fulness and finality of the sacrifice of Christ with which the New Testament

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and more especially the epistle to the Hebrews abound.

We are told that "by the one offering of Himself once offered he for ever perfected them that are sanctified:" it is asserted that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Again it is written, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The force of this passage cannot be eluded. However casuists may distinguish between bloody and unbloody sacrifice,—between a sacrifice of impetration and of application,—it is clear, that as a man cannot die sundry kinds of death, so neither can the Redeemer be sacrificed in sundry ways; and that as after death comes the judgment, so between the oblation of Christ on the cross, and his revelation on the judgment-seat, there intervenes no offering. "But now once in the end of the world

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hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Before such statements,—so broad, so plain,—how dare men talk about sacrificing priests, and a repetition of the offering of Christ? Ought they not to shudder lest in attempting to honour and exalt ministers and their ministration, they should be dishonouring the High Priest of our profession, and degrading his perfect sacrifice? It is true that *figurative* sacrifices are often mentioned spoken under the new dispensation, but *literal* sacrifices,—never.

We need not, however, enlarge on the evidence of Scripture against the notion of the Eucharist involving a sacrifice; for even the abettors of the figment are forced to state, with more ingenuousness than is common with them, "Scripture, it must be acknowledged, is very silent on the subject." It is to the Church, therefore, they rather make their appeal; but we shall find, as we have repeatedly found, that where the oracles of Heaven are silent, her voice

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will not be heard. How strong is her negative witness on the point; how utterly were her sanctuaries and her services purged from the vestiges of Romish usage in this matter! And when we remember how the sacrifice of the mass was incorporated with the whole religion of our land, how it formed the soul and centre of all public worship; how it characterized every temple and pervaded every solemnity; the complete extirpation of the monster abuse is a subject no less for wonder than for thankfulness. In illustration, let us remind you how the word "altar" has been eschewed in our reformed services, and how the altar itself has been cast out of our churches; the word "table" has been studiously substituted for the one, and a simple table of wood for the other. Essential as an altar is to any idea of sacrifice, these substitutions are full of meaning. The solitary occurrence of the expression "altar" in the Coronation Service is fastened upon by the ingenious

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men against whom we are arguing, with an avidity and delight which show to what special pleading they are driven; but pluming themselves as they do on their skill and scrupulosity in ecclesiastical details, they ought to have known that the service in question, though adopted by the Privy Council, was never formally endorsed and authenticated by our church, and consequently has no ecclesiastical authority. In further proof of the mind of our church on this matter, let it be remarked how carefully she has expunged the word "sacrifice," in its *literal* sense, from her Communion Service; and more than this, how significantly and repeatedly she has introduced the expression in its *figurative* meaning; as for instance, in speaking of our alms as "sacrifices"—of the "sacrifice of ourselves, our souls, and bodies"—and of the "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." True it is, the word "priest" is largely retained in our Book of Common Prayer; but since we find that

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the word "minister" is frequently used as its equivalent, and since in the Latin copy of the Thirty-nine Articles, the title "Presbyter," not "Sacerdos," is invariably applied to the ministers of our church, it is almost certain that "priest" is employed in our formularies as an abbreviation for "presbyter," and in no sort as having reference to sacrifice.

There is, however, a solitary expression which occurs in the prayer "for the whole state of Christ's church militant here on earth," on which the Tractarians lay prodigious stress, and build up a goodly theory; it is the expression, "oblations," which they suppose to refer to the placing by the priest of the bread and wine on the holy table, as prescribed by the rubric which precedes this prayer. In this term, which was introduced into the service in the last revision which it underwent, they find we know not what mystic import and rich though plaintive consolation; insomuch that they speak of "our having that

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which prophets and kings have desired to see, what King Charles the First and Bishop Andrews had not, and perhaps what was made the subject of Bishop Andrews' prayer when for the Church of England his supplication was, 'that its deficiencies should be restored.'" What a fabric to rest on so narrow a foundation! —and as sandy as it is narrow. It needs only to be touched and it crumbles away. On examining the antecedent rubric, to which it is clear the words "accept our alms and oblations" refer, we find the following direction: "Whilst these sentences are in reading, the deacons, churchwarden, or other fit person appointed for that purpose, shall receive the alms for the poor, and other devotions of the people, in a decent basin, to be provided by the parish for that purpose, and reverently bring it to the priest, who shall humbly present and place it upon the holy table." Who does not perceive, then, that the words, "alms and oblations," in the prayer, cor-

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respond to the words, "alms and other devotions," in the rubric?—consequently, that the word "oblations" is to be understood exclusively of the free-will offerings of the people which have been presented unto God. Nor is the prayer chargeable with tautology in using the twofold expression, since the word "alms" more properly relates to gifts designed for the poor, and "oblations" to gifts intended for the support of the clergy, and for other ecclesiastical purposes; a distinction fully sustained by the sentences selected to be read during the collection, some of which enforce bounty to the poor, whilst others inculcate liberality to the ministers of Christ. This view is strengthened by the note which is affixed to the passage under discussion:—"If there be no alms or oblations, then shall the words, 'of accepting our alms and oblations,' be left unsaid." It appears, therefore, that in case there be no collection made, even though the Holy Communion should be

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administered, the mystic, the momentous expression is to be dropped;—alas! what then becomes of the peerless privilege which monarchs lacked, and for which prelates sighed and prayed?

But why should we dwell longer on the *negative* evidence against the doctrine of sacrifice which our Church presents, when her *positive* evidence on the point is so definite and emphatical? In her thirty-first Article, "Of the one Oblation of Christ finished on the Cross," she thus determines: "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone; wherefore the sacrifices of masses, in the which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits!" Nowhere does the Church employ terms more pungent, in-

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dignant, and severe, than these, in denouncing error; thus showing that she looked upon the heresy so denounced as surpassingly mischievous and profane. And however her denunciation may fall heaviest on the head of the "mystery of iniquity," it assuredly does not pass unscathed the heads of her own professed sons who doat and talk about the "propitiatory sacrifice" of the Eucharist. It needs not that we should do more than remind you of the last clause in the Article "Of the Lord's Supper," in which it is stated, "The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance, reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped,"—words levelled, it is clear, against the elevation and adoration of the Host; nor need we, though we might, bring forward the uncompromising witness which the Homilies bear; for surely enough has been adduced to vindicate our Church from all misprision, much more maintenance, of the perilous notion of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

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We now address ourselves to the more congenial part of our plan, and proceed to elucidate the true view of the Lord's Supper and of the benefits which it communicates, as set forth in Holy Scripture and maintained by our primitive Church. That view regards the ordinance as a memorial and as much more than a memorial. Those who look upon it in the former light only, dishonour the institution and defraud their own souls. No doubt it is a memorial, a graphic, expressive memorial; and so Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me;" and so St. Paul wrote, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." It is a standing commemoration in the Church both of our deliverance by Christ, and of the manner in which that deliverance was achieved. To the unbelieving it is an irrefutable witness of the cardinal facts of revelation, and to the faithful a kind of visible representation—most simple, but most significant

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—of the great scene on Calvary; so that in a sense, "Christ is evidently set forth before their eyes, crucified amongst them." The Eucharist is all this,—but it is more than this. It is to the faithful a lively and effectual means whereby they "feed upon Christ in their hearts by faith with thanksgivings; they spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood," insomuch that their "souls are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, as their bodies are by the bread and wine." The cup which they drink, and the bread which they eat, is "the communion," or participation, of the crucified Saviour.

To make this plain, and to unfold the force and fitness of the figure employed, we must enlarge a little. Be it borne in mind, then, there are various kinds and degrees of created life, all of which have, and require, appropriate aliment. There is vegetable, animal, intellectual, spiritual life. These, or at least the three latter, may combine, and, to a certain extent, co-

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alesce, in the same subject. So in man, —complex, mysterious man,—the juncture of creation,—the link between the material and the immaterial,—we find animal, intellectual, and, when he is what he was in the beginning, spiritual life united. Not so united however, but that one may survive another. Thus we know that the animal life may continue when the intellectual is destroyed, and that both these may exist, though the spiritual be no more. It was this life, the perfection of the reasonable soul, the life which angels have and devils lack, that Adam forfeited when he fell. In the hour he sinned, in that hour he died; the Spirit of God forsook his soul, and as the body without the soul is dead, so the soul without the Spirit is dead. The Holy Ghost is the soul of the soul. But what we lost in the first Adam, we regain in the second. To as many as receive him, to them gives he power to become the sons of God; the Spirit re-enters and reanimates their souls

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—the believer becomes "a living soul." This is spiritual life, "the new man," "the hidden man of the heart." But this life requires its appropriate sustenance. It cannot grow and mature except it be nourished. Such is the law of life in this world. Animal life demands material food, intellectual, mental aliment, so that books have been commonly styled "pabulum mentis"—food of the mind; and in like manner, spiritual life needs spiritual sustenance. *The truth* is that sustenance —"the truth as it is in Jesus"—especially the doctrine of his death and blood-shedding as the propitiation for sin. This is the "marrow and fatness of the Gospel. "I," says Christ, "am the bread of life." "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." The exercise of living faith on Christ crucified; this it is which refreshes every energy and strengthens every member of the new man. As really as natural food nourishes

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animal life, so really does intellectual food nourish mental life—and no less but rather more really does feeding on the sacrifice of the Lamb of God nourish spiritual life. Thus you see how close and clear the analogy, how simple and forceful the figure.

Now, as it seemed good to Christ to institute a sacrament of our regeneration, as a seal and instrument of our quickening into spiritual life, so it seemed to him good to ordain a sacrament of our nutrition in that life, an expressive sign and efficacious means of our deriving vital power and aliment from fellowship with himself. Whilst, then, it is true that we may feed upon Christ *without* the sacrament, it is equally true that we have reason to expect a special supply of the food of our souls *in* the sacrament. If the faithful *hearer* is nourished by the sacrifice of Christ, still more shall the faithful *communicant* be so nourished. He shall so realize, apprehend, appropriate the body and blood of his Lord, through the power

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of the Holy Ghost, that all the faculties and functions of the spiritual man will be strengthened,—faith made more stedfast, repentance more deep, love more fervent, hope more lively, patience more perfect, charity more vivid, joy more full; Christ will become more precious, sin more loathsome, holiness more longed for, and heaven more dear. If such be the results, then, has there not been a real presence of Christ to his people? Have they not "verily and indeed taken and received" his body and blood—spiritually, but effectually—in the Holy Feast? Is not the benefit great if, with a true penitent heart and lively faith, we receive that holy sacrament; since then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us?" To "the natural man all this seems mystical and unmeaning; it is foolishness to him, neither can he know it, because it is spiritually discerned: but to the spiritual

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man, who "discerns the Lord's body," there can be nothing more sure and real than that the body and blood of Christ nourish his soul, and that in the Holy Communion that heavenly sustenance is pre-eminently communicated. He, therefore, can heartily and experimentally join in the expressive prayer which follows the administration of the elements, in our matchless service:—"Almighty and everlasting God, we most heartily thank thee, for that thou dost vouchsafe to feed us who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son; which is "the blessed company of all faithful people: and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son. Amen."

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In this comprehensive prayer a fresh purpose and benefit of the holy communion is recognized. It is not only a commemoration of the death of Christ, and a means of our spiritual fruition of his body and blood, but it is a pledge to assure us of our union and communion with Him. When we receive the elements and partake of them, it is as though Christ whispered to our hearts, "As surely as thou receivest these lively symbols of my death, so surely is my sacrifice thine, I am thy salvation!" How sweet the satisfaction, how refreshing the assurance thus conveyed to the souls of the faithful! And how meetly and delightfully do they reciprocate his love in the touching language,—"Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee." This intimate and endearing fellowship between Christ and his chosen guests, constitutes the very spirit and essence of the Eucharist. He, therefore, who

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would reduce the ordinance to a naked memorial, disregarding it as an effectual means of blessing and nutrition to his soul, puts a slight upon the heavenly feast, and upon him who presides at the table.

And now, men and brethren, having striven to vindicate the supper of the Lord from the gross superstitions with which so many overlay it, and having endeavoured to establish your minds in what we conceive to be the scriptural view of the ordinance, suffer briefly the word of exhortation. Beware, we pray you, of extremes on either hand. Whilst you guard against superstitious and idolatrous views of the Eucharist, take heed also of irreverent and disparaging views. Do not make light of the sign, however you shrink from resting in it as a substitute for what it signifies. See that you always approach the holy feast hungering and thirsting after your spiritual sustenance, and clothed in the wedding garment required of God in holy Scripture.

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Let me add,—beware of a slavish and disquieting fear in drawing near to your Saviour's board. Let not reverence degenerate into dread. Coming in sincerity of faith, your Lord addresses you as the angel did the women who sought the sepulchre. "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." It is not on the judgment-seat, but on the cross; it is not as the judge, but as the Redeemer, you are approaching him—come, then, with a firm trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience.

Expect a largeness of blessing in the blessed sacrament. You honour your master by so doing. "He filleth the hungry with good things." He saith, "open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Assuredly, if supremacy is to be assigned to any one christian institution beyond all others, it must be to that which was ordained under circumstances of surpassing interest and solemnity, in a manner the most tender and impressive, and for a pur-

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pose the most vital and endearing. Are we not, therefore, warranted, yea bound, to anticipate a rich and special blessing from its enjoyment.

To those who may be disposed to draw near to Christ's table, formally, unadvisedly, unpreparedly, we cannot forbear addressing a word of warning. We would put them in mind that though the sacrament is no tremendous mystery, no prodigious miracle, yet is it a most divine and sacred thing; so that he who eateth and drinketh unworthily is guilty of "the body and blood of the Lord;" wherefore "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

But, once more, in the prospect of the administration of the holy communion in this church on next Sunday, we cannot close without appealing to such as are habitually neglecting the touching injunction, or rather invitation, of their Master— "Do this in remembrance of me." We would put it solemnly to them,—ought they to rest

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for a single hour in a state of mind which shuts them out, themselves being judges, from the table of the Redeemer? If they dare not meet him as the Lamb slain, how shall they bear to meet him as the Judge of quick and dead? If they shrink from him when set before them as the man of sorrows, the merciful high priest, how shall they endure to look upon him robed in dreadful majesty, seated on the throne of his glory? If now, whilst he says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden," they refuse to hearken, and heartlessly depart from the feast of fat things which he has furnished, they do not seem to forestall the fearful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed?" God grant that these solemn thoughts may take hold upon their consciences, constrain them to repentance, and give them no rest, until they find it in Him who is the contrite sinner's peace.—Amen and Amen!

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SERMON XII.

FASTING AND VOLUNTARY HUMILITY.

ISAIAH lviii. 5, 6, 7.—Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house: when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Proportion is essential to symmetry, and symmetry to beauty. In the human form, if one member be defective, and another exaggerated, the effect of the figure

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is marred. So, in the human face, let one feature be unduly small, and another disproportionately large, and the whole character of the countenance is affected. As it is in what is physical, so it is in what is moral and spiritual. Nothing is so exquisite in christian character as coherence and consistency. The Christian, as delineated in holy Scripture, is specially distinguished by this excellence; in the Bible you never find one duty trenching upon another, nor one precept coming into collision with another,—all are in lovely harmony. Look at the exemplification of the law in the life of the divine Lawgiver, who became the impersonation of his own law, and left us an example that we should follow his steps. What is the crowning perfection in the character of our Lord Jesus Christ as man? It is not the prominence or the predominance of any one grace, but the inimitable combination and proportion of all the graces of the Spirit. You trace in him no *characteristic* virtue,

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no one perfection eclipsing all the rest. His character was like his coat,—"without seam, woven from the top throughout;" or like the rainbow around about his throne, the colours distinct and manifold, yet so blended without being confounded, so shaded into each other, that no eye can trace the exquisite line where one ends and another begins, but all form one ravishing whole.

How unlike the original thus sketched in the law and embodied in the Gospel, are many of the copies exhibited both by individuals and by churches! How have they disjointed, disfigured, and distorted the perfect pattern given by the Redeemer, and that, in many instances, not so much by mutilation as by dislocation. For in christian doctrine and in christian morals errors may be and have been as effectually introduced by the introduction of disproportion as by the introduction of absolute heresy. It is quite enough to mar the system of divine truth, and

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derange the code of christian duty and observance, that in the former case, you should put one tenet, and in the latter one ordinance, out of its proper place, out of its relative proportion. If you bring into the foreground what Scripture has put in the background, or cast into the shade what revelation has placed in the full light, you effectually deform Christianity. You may say,—"we repudiate no truth,—we set aside no institution,—we reject no precept." True, yet you disarrange and by disarranging you injure all. So has it been done in almost every age. Circumstantials have been exaggerated into essentials, and essentials made light of as though they were circumstantials: duties and observances of a positive and vital nature have been disparaged, whilst others of secondary moment have been made of paramount importance. Thus has it specially fared with fasting. By some it has been extolled and enforced as of strongest obligation and surpassing vir-

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tue. By others, who recoil from such overcolouring, it is associated with formalism, superstition, or hypocrisy. Amongst the former the Tractarian school have ranged themselves. "Fasting and voluntary humility" they hold in wondrous admiration. Not content with attaching an exorbitant importance to abstinence, they ascribe to it a merit before God which Rome herself would hardly avouch. Let the following extracts from a manual of devotion* issued and circulated by the party, suffice to substantiate this charge. —"O God, who dost purify thy church, by the annual fast of forty-days; grant to thy family that what they strive by abstinence to obtain from thee, they may effectually obtain by the help of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord."†

"O God, who through their fasting bestowest pardon on the sinner, and rewards

* Horæ Canonicæ, or Devotions for the Seven Stated Hours of Prayer.

† p. 99,

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on the righteous; have compassion on thy supplicants, that we confessing our guilt, may obtain the pardon of our sins; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." *

"O Lord, we beseech Thee, of thy favour pour thy grace into our hearts; that we, restraining our sins by voluntary chastisements, may rather now suffer in this life present, than be given up to be punished everlastingly; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." †

"Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that as by our excesses we have wounded the perfection of our nature, so by giving up ourselves to the medicine of abstinence it may be restored, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." ‡ And these are propagated by Protestant divines as models of devotion for the members of our reformed church!!

Their views on fasting and on "voluntary humility," (that is unbidden bodily maceration,) are still more unblushingly

* p. 110. † p. 115. ‡ p. 114.

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developed in a series of so-styled "Lives of the Saints," now in the course of publication. These biographies hold up for admiration and imitation specimens of wild enthusiasm and senseless asceticism, such as are not outdone in the vast museum of fanaticism, furnished by Rome. O the fatuity or the effrontery of men professing themselves churchmen to exhibit such caricatures of sanctity, such libels on devotion, as models for the faithful!

Standing as we do on the threshold of that season of humiliation which ushers in the commemoration of the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, our subject for this evening is peculiarly opportune; and since there are few practical points on which the minds of many children of the church are less settled and informed, and on which their spiritual pastors more frequently leave them without instruction, than the question of fasting, I am the rather induced to enlarge upon the theme. The remonstrance which God addressed by

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the prophet to his people of old,—a people who abounded in external fasting, whilst they lacked the spirit of the observance, —this expostulation, which indicates both the duty and the essence of true abstinence, may fitly form the basis of our discourse.

Our design is to show you the scriptural sanction for fasting; the subordinate place which it holds in christian ethics; and then to point out the soul and purpose of the ordinance, without which it is a shadow and a mockery,—taking occasion, at the same time, to prove the worse than uselessness of unbidden austerities. God grant that his Spirit may accompany his word, to our edification and to his glory !

That fasting is sanctioned, if not enjoined, by the Word of God, can be clearly proved. God himself ordained it under the law on the great day of atonement. On that day every Israelite was bound to accompany his humiliation and

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confession of sin with abstinence from food and from every kind of indulgence. As a religious institution, therefore, fasting is of divine appointment. And though we read of no other stated fast, we find fasting repeatedly mentioned and recognised as a service to God in the writings of the prophets. Thus, in the passage affixed to this discourse, it is evident that God approved of the exercise of fasting, whilst he reprobated the manner in which the people fasted. The prophet Joel, arousing Israel to repentance, says,—"sanctify a fast." And God by the same prophet urges them to turn to Him—"with fasting." Individual fasting was often practised by the ancient saints in trouble, in humiliation, or in special devotion. David says,—"I humbled my soul with fasting and prayer." When his child was sick unto death, "he fasted and wept." Joshua fasted; Moses fasted; Daniel, "a man greatly beloved," sought mercy for Israel,

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"with fastings." Such instances might be multiplied, but we need not more.

It will not be denied, then, that the Old Testament countenances fasting, but it is maintained by many that it was set aside under the New. This, however, though often assumed, has never been proved. True, the observance is not bound upon us as it was on the Jews. We have no fixed periodical fast. Still, there is sufficient sanction for the practice to deter a godly man from looking upon it as superseded and vain. Our blessed Lord fasted, and though the length of his fast was preternatural, the sanction which he stamped upon the exercise is not therefore weakened. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that he would have thus sanctioned it had he intended that it should not be practised by his followers. And when in his Sermon on the Mount he warned his disciples against hypocritical fasting, He did not say, "fast not at all,"—on the

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contrary, He said, "But thou when thou fastest anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." This is striking language; to godly fasting is promised an open reward; it must, therefore, be acceptable when acceptably performed. To the same effect was the reply of Christ to the Pharisees, when they complained to Him that his disciples fasted not: He did not take occasion to repudiate or disparage fasting,—He rather countenanced and avouched it; for he answered and said unto them,—"Can the children of the bride-chamber fast whilst the bridegroom is with them?" Could they be sad whilst their joy—their Master—was with them? "But the days shall come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast in those days." It is true, that these words seem to limit the abstinence of the disciples to the period of Christ's

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sepulture, but as the bodily presence of Christ is still withdrawn from the church militant, it is only fair to regard the passage as having at least a secondary reference to after-times. All this is confirmed by the occasional practice of the Apostles. They fasted before they chose a successor to Judas. In solemn preparation for the sending forth of Paul and Barnabas to the work to which the Lord had called them, the assembled disciples fasted. St. Paul likewise specifies fastings as one of the things in which he and his companions approved themselves as the ministers of God. The expression has indeed been explained as meaning involuntary abstinence; but the word in the original will hardly bear such construction, being the term usually employed to signify fasting in the strict sense of the word.

On the whole, then, it does not appear, that Christians are warranted in looking upon themselves as released from all obligation to fast. The occasions, the degree

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and other circumstances, are indeed left undefined, but there is sufficient authority for the exercise itself.

In conformity with the Word of God, our church has fully recognised the duty of fasting. She has designated in her calendar certain seasons for the practice; not indeed prescribing the precise manner or measure of abstinence, nor yet directly binding it upon her children, but rather leaving them ample room to exercise their own discretion. In the following exquisite collect, we are taught alike the duty and the purpose of holy abstinence. "O Lord, who for our sakes didst fast forty days and forty nights, give us grace to use such abstinence that our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness to thy honour and glory who livest and reignest with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."

But it is time that we should prove to

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you, that neither Scripture nor our Church gives to fasting the prominence and weight which some are bent on attaching to it, and that voluntary humility has no countenance from either. Even during the severer dispensation of the law, there was, as we have before remarked, only one obligatory fast; and though occasional fasting is sometimes recognised in the writings of the prophets, yet little can be found directly enjoining the observance. When we come to the dispensation of leniency and love, we find in the New Testament nothing ascetical in the aspect of religion, nothing which the most perverse ingenuity can twist into an enforcement of bodily austerities. Whilst the Baptist—a link between the two economies—"came neither eating nor drinking," abstinent and austere, —the Son of Man, in striking contrast, came "eating and drinking," social, gentle, genial. And as was the Author of salvation, so is the record: it breathes tenderness, not severity; it is replete, not with

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privation, but with privilege ; it proscribes nothing but sin, or what tends to sin. All this is in keeping with its genius and purpose. It is the revelation of God's method to make man happy again. This is its truest as well as its loveliest character. Whatever of sorrow or of suffering it may occasion —whatever of self-denial or of mortification it may demand, springs out of the nature of the human heart, not out of the spirit of the Gospel. If there be bitterness in repentance,—pain in self-denial, struggle and anguish in the christian warfare,—these arise from our untoward nature, and unhappy circumstances, not from the spirit or the operation of Christianity. The remedy has but one end in view,—our restoration to holiness, to happiness, and to God ; it is owing to our diseased nature that the balm in Gilead ever proves distasteful or occasions pain. Such being the spirit of the Gospel, such its gentle and glorious design, we might have anticipated what we actually find in its pages—

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an absence of all harshness, and a sternness of tone, of all inculcation of self-denial for its own sake, of anything fitted to denaturalize or debase the believer. The strange and savage austerities of the middle ages, the cloistered penances and self-inflicted cruelties of Romish saints, find no shadow of a sanction in the life or doctrine of Christ and his apostles. The only history in the New Testament which bears any analogy to theirs, is his who "was night and day in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones;" and this we know was the work of the evil spirit, not of the good. Nay, more, the Gospel warns us against "voluntary humility" and those things "which have a show of wisdom in the neglecting of the body;" telling us that "bodily exercise profiteth little." Even on the subject of fasting the evidence in its favour is negative rather than positive. Whilst you find line upon line and precept upon precept enjoining prayer and praise, thanksgiving and almsgiving, you

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cannot discover a single command directly obliging to abstinence. To put the latter, therefore, on a par with the former, to class them together as equally incumbent on the children of God, has no warrant from the New Testament. It is argued, indeed, that the least intimation, the slightest suggestion from holy Scripture is quite sufficient for a teachable mind, and just as binding as the plainest declarations. But we have not so learned Christ. Although we would not be deaf to the faintest whisper of the lively oracles, nor slight their least commandment, yet we contend that reason and revelation alike teach us, that what the Bible makes prominent we are not to make retired, and what it makes subordinate we are not to exalt. If, therefore, fasting be sparingly and indirectly enforced in holy Scripture, it ought to be sparingly and moderately inculcated in the Church. Consequently, to make it of equivalent importance with the moral statutes and positive institutions of Chris-

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tianity, involves a twofold error; on the one hand exaggerating what is secondary, on the other disparaging what is paramount; and so, impairing the proportion of faith.

Our church has, we conceive, imitated the moderation of holy Scripture on the subject of fasting. She has designated certain fitting periods for holy abstinence; she has explained and justified the exercise, but she has nevertheless left the point, to a great degree, open to the conscience and discretion of her members. It would be difficult to adduce from her formularies anything on the topic more positive than the language of the New Testament.

We now proceed to the most interesting and important branch of our discourse—the true spirit, character, and purpose of christian abstinence and humiliation. Self-denial is essential to Christianity. This follows inevitably from the corruption of the flesh and the purity of the spirit. For a man to indulge himself, and obey his native inclination, is to obey that heart

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which "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," is to "sow to the flesh, and of the flesh to reap corruption." He, therefore, who will not "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts;" who will not "mortify his members which are upon the earth;" who will not strive to "abolish the whole body of sin;" who is not prepared to hate father and mother and sister and brother, yea, and life itself, in comparison with Christ,—that man cannot be Christ's disciple. The Lord has written over the threshold of the strait gate—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself daily, and take up his cross and follow me." A self-indulgent Christian is a practical lie. Habitual self-denial, then, is the essence, bodily abstinence the accident, of christian mortification,—the one, as we have seen, is scarcely enjoined in the Gospel, the other is enforced in a variety of forms,—the one is an occasional means, the other a fixed principle, an inwrought

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habit of the soul. Where the latter is wanting, the former is no better than a shadow and a mockery. We are not only to be temperate *sometimes* and *in some things*, but *always*, and *in all things*. The mortification which is practised by fits and starts,—which goes on the principle that to-day's indulgence may be compensated for by to-morrow's austerities, that the licentiousness of the feast day may be cancelled by the rigour of the fast day: such mortification resembles the patchwork cloak of the Pharisee, rather than the seamless robe of the Saviour. And let it not be forgotten how powerful the tendency of the human heart to substitute the form for the power,—the outward act for the inward state. *Spiritual* self-denial is what man hates. Yet some talk as if all self-denial consisted in fasting, in meagre days, in fleshly austerities. But there is a self-denial,—how much more painful and arduous than these—how much more nauseous to man's proud spirit,—and that is,

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the denial of his secret tempers, affections, passions, lusts. The great work of mortification is within, not without. It lies in the crucifixion of the desires of the mind no less than of the flesh. It is not so much outward things as *himself*—his *very natural self*—the Christian must deny. In his *own breast* is the battle-field; *there* the warfare for eternity is to be waged; *there* the prize of our high calling is to be won or lost for ever. It is clear, then, that there may be a large amount of seeming self-denial whilst the deep reality is lacking. There may be a great deal of bodily austerity which is no better than *was* that of the Jewish Pharisee, than *is* that of the Hindoo fakeer. It may be nothing else but the opiate for a guilty conscience, or the food of spiritual pride. So it was to him who stood so self-complacently before God, not to confess his faults but to trumpet his merits,—the Pharisee, who "prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men

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are .... I fast twice a week." Thus abstinence was aliment to his arrogance, and by mortifying the lusts of the flesh, "he was pampering the desires of the mind,"—starving what we have in common with the animal to nourish what we have in common with the fiend. And was not *he* the type of multitudes in after-ages,—the countless swarm of canonized ascetics of the Nicene and subsequent periods? Good though misguided men there were amongst them, but who can read their records and not discern how many of them knew not "what manner of spirit they were of,"—how many were burning with ambition to be reputed and to repute themselves—saints;—to be canonized on earth and as a consequence to take precedence in heaven! And what were the achievements on which they plumed themselves? For the most part outrages against our social nature. Their eulogies and chronicles by schoolmen and (so-styled) fathers, are many of them alike revolting to com-

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mon sense, and libels on the benign and reasonable service of Christ. As though to estrange a man's self from all the charities, endearments, and relationships of life, —as though to renounce all the duties as well as the privileges of society,—as though to stable with the wild-beasts of the forest, or grovel in filthiness with the swine,—as though these things were to sublimate the soul, to assimilate it to God, and fit it for the fellowship of the saints in light! As though through the embrasures of the monastery, the lattice of the nunnery, or the chinks of the cavern, believers could best let their light so shine before men as to lead them to glorify God! Strange slavery of error,—fearful blindness of self-righteousness, that men should deem this a reasonable service, a service acceptable to the God of wisdom, love, and joy! What right-minded man can peruse the sketches of the persons held up to us by a certain school as models of perfection, without being at a loss whether to weep

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over the depth of self-delusion which they display, or to turn with loathing from such libellous caricatures of Christianity!

What, then, beloved brethren, is the practical point to which we are brought? It is this,—that as in prayer, and every other christian exercise, so in fasting, the state of the heart before God is everything. Abstinence, however prolonged,—outward symbols of humiliation, however multiplied,—if the broken and contrite spirit be wanting, are of no avail. Fasting is the result rather than the instrument, the expression rather than the spring, of godly sorrow. Viewed in this light it is natural and befitting. It is no uncommon thing in the affairs of human life for a man, when wrung with bitter anguish, or absorbed by some agitating suspense, to lose all heed and desire for food, so as naturally to abstain. Who is there that has agonized under the bereavement of some one dear to him as his own life, and felt at that hour as though the world were hung with sackcloth, and the

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earth become a wilderness?—did he not at that crisis instinctively shrink from kinsfolk, and acquaintance, from his ordinary comforts and ordinary sustenance, and feel silence and solitude and abstinence to be most in harmony with his heart? These things did not beget his grief, but his grief begat them. Akin to these are the effects resulting from intensity of interest in some critical event involving fortune, fame or life. At such a crisis a man has been known to forget the wants of nature, and become insensible to the cravings of appetite. But if earthly griefs and temporal interests are powerful enough to produce such manifestations, how much more should spiritual griefs and everlasting interests produce them! It follows, therefore, that in seasons of special contrition and abasement,—in seasons of intense solicitude about their everlasting destiny,—in seasons when past guilt or present deficiencies press overwhelmingly upon them,—in seasons when their apprehensions of the Saviour's suf-

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ferings, "his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion," are overpowering; —that at such seasons, as a spontaneous result of the state of their souls, it is meet and natural that the faithful should forget or disregard the calls and cravings of their animal nature. And when abstinence thus serves as the sign and proof of the inward frame, doubtless it is a seemly and acceptable accompaniment of spiritual humiliation. After all, it is the broken and contrite heart which God will not despise. Let this be lacking, and fasting is a mockery. Let this be ours, and the rest will follow. Then we shall fast to God and not to man. The human eye will be shunned,—the Divine eye alone regarded. Such is the fast our Lord so touchingly describes. "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou when thou fastest anoint thine head, and wash

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thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

All that we have just stated is so strikingly sustained by two passages in the Homily on Fasting, that we cannot forbear adducing them. Speaking of abstinence as the expression of inward emotion, it is said,—"For when good men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, and behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart for their offences, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open this their grief unto Almighty God, and call upon Him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and

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loathsomeness of all worldly things, and pleasures cometh in place; so that nothing then liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behaviour of body, to show themselves weary of this life." . . . Again, treating of the purposes of fasting, we meet with these weighty sentiments,— "Good works are not all of one sort. For some are of themselves, and of their proper nature, always good; as to love God above all things, to love my neighbour as myself, to honour father and mother, to honour the higher powers, to give to every man that which is his due, and such like. Other works there be, which considered in themselves without further respect, are of their own nature merely indifferent, that is, neither good nor evil, but take their denomination of the use or end whereunto they serve: which works having a good end, are called good works, and are so, indeed, but yet that cometh not of themselves, but of the good end, whereunto they are re-

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ferred. On the other side, if the end that they serve unto be evil, it cannot then otherwise be, but that they must needs be evil also. Of this sort of works is fasting, which of itself is a thing merely indifferent, but is made better or worse by the end that it serveth unto. For when it respecteth a good end, it is a good work; but the end being evil, the work itself is also evil. To fast, then, with this persuasion of mind that our fasting and our good works can make us perfect and just men, and finally bring us to heaven, is a devilish persuasion, and that fast is so far off from pleasing God, that it refuseth his mercy, and is altogether derogatory to the merits of Christ's death, and His precious blood-shedding."

Let us, then, brethren, hear the end of the whole matter. Our controversy with the Tractarian school on this point, is not because they enforce a more stated and general observance of fasting than has of late years been practised in the Church; but be-

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cause they give an undue prominence to the duty, and attach to it a virtue and a value for which there is no scriptural warrant; thus, on the one hand, deranging the proportion of christian truth, and on the other converting the ordinance into a snare. Recoiling from the laxity and self-indulgence which so fearfully prevail, they have rushed into the opposite extreme, or, rather, they would strike a balance between alternate austerity and self-indulgence.

Far be it from us to deny that self-denial and mortification are urgently called for amongst multitudes who name the name of Christ. Assuredly there is a cause why we should "cry aloud, and spare not,"—because of the immoderation, the luxury, the ostentation, the voluptuousness which prevail on every side. In these days, when the golden tide of prosperity is flowing in upon us afresh, how startling to see with the return of prosperity the proportionate outburst of extravagance, display,

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and pride! Alas! what tables loaded with costly viands! What rivalry in pomp and show! What magnificence in furniture and equipage! What grudging communication to the cause and to the poor of Christ! What lavish profusion in ornamenting, pampering, and exalting self! Where is the crucifixion of the flesh,—where the daily self-denial,—where the unearthly conversation which ought to characterize the disciples of Christ? Brethren, "let your moderation be known of all men." Is a Christian man to vie with his worldly neighbours in splendour and sumptuousness? Is he to be ambitious that his equipage should be as showy, his furniture as costly, his table as dainty, as theirs? What then, does he more than others? Can he belong to that company of whom the Saviour said,—"They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." True, the good creatures of God are given us to be used with thanksgiving, but it is the abuse we are reprobating; and were there

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more of wholesome abstinence, did we more endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, it would be better for the health of the body, the vigour of the mind, and the soundness of the spirit. Be it yours, beloved, to walk in wisdom, to keep the middle track, remote alike from pharisaical asceticism, and antinomian licentiousness.

Take as your guide the rule laid down by the Apostle, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." We have endeavoured to bring the subject of fasting to bear on your understandings and your consciences; but should you still be ready to say,—"You have left us after all, without positive rule on the subject:" we answer, Scripture has done the same. Follow out the scheme of your Church so far as health and other circumstances may allow you, yet do not surrender your christian liberty, nor embarrass your conscience with nice distinctions. "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in

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drink, or in respect of an holyday," or, (may we not add?) in respect of a fasting day. All persons are not alike. What would conduce to devotion in one case, would hinder it in another. The weak cannot abstain as the strong, and the strong may be so circumstanced as to be prevented from abstaining. Wherefore, let no man judge his brother, but let each one judge himself. Again, we say,—"let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Let him that fasteth fast to the Lord, and he that fasteth not, to the Lord let him not fast; bearing in mind that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and that "happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." So far Scripture leads us. Further we do not see our way. Christians ought to recognize fasting as sanctioned by the Word of God, but in the practice of the duty each individual must very much judge, according to his own circumstances and conscience, how far God requires it at

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his hand. Therefore, brethren, "whether ye eat or drink,"—whether ye abstain, or partake with moderation and thankfulness, —"do all to the glory of God."

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SERMON XIII.

FORMS, CHURCH ARCHITECTURE, AND CHURCH FURNITURE.

John iv. 24.—God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

We are told of the fair city where the righteous shall dwell for ever, that there is no temple there, for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" *there* every spot is holy ground, every place a place of worship. We are not told that in paradise, man's brief heaven on earth, there was any material temple; and had man retained his innocency, it seems unlikely that he would have had, or needed, any temple made with hands.

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The earth would have been his altar, the heavens his dome, and the world his temple. But fallen man needed a system of means and appliances for his restoration; and God, in condescension to our weakness, and to aid us in drawing near to himself, saw fit to record his name in special places, where he would specially come to bless his people. Whilst therefore our houses of prayer are in some sort tokens of our infirmity, they are still more symbols of the grace which has visited us in our ruin. Hence we may learn with what feelings we ought to regard those habitations where God's honour dwelleth. Exercising a sober wisdom, we must not on the one hand disesteem or profane them, nor must we, on the other, sully them with superstition, or mar the simplicity which ought to distinguish them.

Founding our remarks on the sublime words of the Redeemer to the woman of Samaria, words pointed equally against the bigoted exclusiveness of the Samari-

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tans, who would limit the worship of the Most High to their Gerizim, and the fond self-complacency of the Jews, who because of their Zion exclaimed,—"the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we,"—in opposition to both of whom Jesus thus laid down the principle of all acceptable service:—"God is a Spirit,"—immaterial, invisible, infinite,—"and they that worship him"—as it follows from his nature, as reason herself would tell us,—"must worship him in spirit and in truth:" basing our observations on this august declaration, we purpose, on the present occasion, to guard and vindicate our own forms and places of worship from insidious attempts to mar their simplicity.

The bent of man ever since his apostacy has been to the flesh. Yea, he is represented by Scripture as having in some sort become flesh. Thus Christ declares "that which is born of the flesh is flesh:" and unrenewed men are described as "in the flesh," and as "walking

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after the flesh." This carnality of mind manifests itself not only in the things of earth, by the enslavement of the soul to sense and appetite, by the absorption of the immortal energies of man in passing trifles, but still more grossly, if not fatally, does it discover itself in the things of God. For the religion of unregenerate man is emphatically a carnal religion,—a religion suited to his fleshly mind. Having lost the power of faith, being bereft of spiritual vision, he cannot conceive of God, he cannot draw nigh to him, he cannot hold communion with him—as he is; he must image the Divine Being to his soul, he must bring down the infinite Spirit to his senses. Hence it is that man has evinced in every age, in every land, under every form and modification of civil and social condition, so intense and irrepressible a tendency to idolatry. The religion of fallen man is essentially idolatrous; even where images are not made, images are conceived by him, and representations of God to the

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imagination are little better than representations of him to the senses. We need not, for our object does not require us, pursue this line of illustration in reference to mankind at large, it is only needful for us to trace it out in relation to man when brought under the light of revelation. This we would do as introductory to our examination of the melancholy development of the same principle as it is working amongst ourselves.

When God revealed himself to Israel and gave them ordinances and institutions of worship, it seemed good to him to treat them as in a state of spiritual childhood, and to appoint for them an apparatus of worship pre-eminently ceremonial. The Law had a multiplicity of sacrifices and solemnities, of signs and symbols;—mere letter to the unbelieving, but to the faithful, fraught with significance and truth,—material prophecies, eloquent and expressive types, testifying of good things to come, serving as a shadow until the sub-

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stance should arrive,—as day-stars till the sun should absorb them in his splendour. But whilst the system was so characteristically emblematical, whilst even the divine presence was indicated by the light which shone between the cherubim, the whole was accompanied with the most solemn prohibitions, iterated and re-iterated in a thousand forms and with fearful sanctions, against every attempt to image or represent the invisible God. You have only to look into the Mosaic writings to see what pains, what holy ingenuity, were exercised to fence off the Israelites from every approach to idolatry. Above all, the second commandment stood as a wall of fire to guard the divine nature against such outrage. Of all the commandments it is the most minute in its details, and the most fearful in its sanctions. "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not

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bow down to them, nor worship them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments." Could language more thrillingly bespeak the sensitive jealousy with which the Lord regards all attempts to libel and degrade his incomprehensible being? And yet, brethren, notwithstanding all this,—notwithstanding that God had built such a wall of separation between Israel and the heathen,—notwithstanding that he had given them such affluence of symbol and ceremonial,—you know that the whole history of the Jewish nation, as contained in the Bible is little else than a record of their inveterate and incurable idolatrousness. Images of the Deity they would make; idols of gold and silver they would multiply; the gods of the Gentiles they would worship, though God warned them, threatened them, intreated and bewailed

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them; though he poured upon them judgment upon judgment till they were well nigh rooted out of the land which he had given them to possess it; all did not suffice to remedy the desperate malady of their nature. Thus the chronicles of Israel stand out in the face of the church, through all ages, demonstrating the intense idolatrousness of the human heart, and serving as beacons to warn us of the abhorrence in which that tendency is held by the Almighty.

Under the New Testament dispensation it might have been anticipated that there would be no scope for man to develope his idolatrous disposition,—that such is the perfect simplicity and spirituality of the economy of grace that it would be impossible to debase it into a carnal system. It is distinguished from that which it superseded in nothing more than in what may be aptly styled,—its *informality*. The one St. Paul describes as, in a sense, "carnal," as "the law of a carnal commandment," and as having "carnal ordi-

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nances;" the other he represents as "the ministration of the Spirit:" yea, he styles the gospel emphatically,—"Spirit." The legal economy was encumbered with an immense amount of furniture, appendage, ceremony, and ritual, so that an apostle declares it to have been "a yoke which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear." But how great the contrast presented by the gospel! Let any man read the Book of Leviticus, or that of Deuteronomy, and then read the apostolic epistles, and he cannot but be struck with the difference. In the former, how much of what is sensible, ceremonial, and symbolical; in the latter how little; in the one, how much about the exterior of worship,—in the other about "the spirit of the mind;" in the one how much respecting material sacrifices and fleshly purifications,—in the other, respecting the renewal of the heart, and the spiritual offerings of prayer and praise! This contrast ought to arrest and overawe the minds of those who seek to carnalize

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"the glorious gospel of the blessed God." It was to the very peculiarity on which we are dwelling the Redeemer specially referred in his discourse with the woman of Samaria when he said, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father;" and again, "but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Thus, national distinctions were swept away, and localized ordinances set aside, by the ministration of the Spirit. With what glorious amplitude and catholicity was this asserted on another occasion by the Saviour; he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It needs not that we should further enlarge in proof of the antagonism of the Gospel to everything like carnal and cumbrous ceremonial. And yet, despite of all this,

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the apostles had not entered into their rest before the leaven of superstition was stealthily at work in the church; Judaising teachers began to alloy the Gospel with the Law, and professed believers to doat about "weak and beggarly elements," "to observe days and months and times and years." For a season, indeed, whilst poor and persecuted, struggling hard against the powers of earth and hell, the Church to a large extent retained her simplicity; but no sooner had she so enlarged her borders than the world did her homage, —no sooner had she waxed in secular splendour, affluence, and authority, than the disposition of the human heart to substitute the material for the immaterial, the "form of godliness for the power," unfolded itself in all its inveteracy, as under the ancient economy. Mysteriously and rapidly, the simple christian house of prayer was transformed into the meretricious and elaborate temple; the heathen idols were replaced by the images of

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angels, apostles, and saints; yea, some of the very idols, by a strange metempsychosis, re-appeared as christian gods,—Jupiter and Mars became Peter and Paul! And then, as "the mystery of iniquity" gained ground, instead of the pure, simple, majestic service of the early sanctuary,—instead of the preaching of Christ crucified, and the artless offerings of praise and prayer,—lo, the mystic and awful sacrifice of the mass; lo, the pompous procession, arrayed in many-coloured vestments, bearing aloft the once simple supper of the Saviour, now transubstantiated into the mighty idol of Rome, amid genuflexions and prostrations, waving censors, flaming torches, tinkling bells, witching music, and "dim, religious light" streaming through tinted window:—blessed Jesus! and is this the pure, spiritual, inartificial service thou gavest to thy people! Yet of those days and things there are some amongst us who talk as if they were unrivalled for piety, devotedness, and muni-

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ficence. But what fruits and proofs have we of these attributes, which may not be found as largely amongst the worshippers of Bramah, or the votaries of the false Prophet? Costly oblations, sumptuous ceremonies, magnificent structures, imposing spectacles,—if these were the glory of Christianity, paganism itself would cast her into the shade. But we have not so learned Christ, neither, thank God! has our church so learned him. Nevertheless, although the discreetest daughter of the Reformation, there have been amongst her sons in days past, and alas! there are amongst them now, those who furnish fresh evidence of the formalism and superstitiousness of the human heart; men who, dissatisfied with the chasteness of our sanctuaries and the simplicity of our worship, aim at deforming those with many of the appendages, and this with much of the formality of Rome. But let us prove to you that we are bringing no railing accusations against these misguided men.

In the first instance, we would notice

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the undue and disproportionate attention which the Tractarian school expend upon rubricks, forms, and matters of order,—things important in their place, and which no man of devout and well-regulated mind will disregard; but which when an exaggerated importance is attached to them, and they engross rather than subserve the mind in the worship of God, become a snare and a stumbling-block. The excessive interest which our modern reformers connect with these things is too notorious to need more than passing illustration. Wherever the movement which they originated, or at least impelled, has spread its vibrations, agitating our own church and more or less agitating the churches throughout the world, its bearing has always been towards augmented formalism. As an invariable result, there has sprung up a petty, morbid, microscopic scrupulosity,—reputed to be conscientiousness,—on mere points of form and order, points held in many instances by the best and wisest judges to be doubtful or unimpor-

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tant, and in other cases to have fallen so completely into desuetude, that if revived at all, they ought to be revived by common consent, by the concurrent authority of our ecclesiastical rulers, or rather by the voice of the church at large, involving that of the laity as well as the hierarchy. The consequence of their introduction by individual clergymen, on their own authority, without in most instances episcopal sanction, and in the face of general usage, has been to divide and disquiet the church; rending it by controversies on matters which, in comparison with the high purposes for which God instituted his church, —even to set forth the Saviour, convert the sinner, edify the saint, and prepare lively stones for the everlasting temple, the temple not made with hands—are but as the drapery of a dream, or the playthings of childhood.

This, however, is not all. Not only do our modern ritualists withdraw attention from the immaterial to the material and from the supreme to the subordinate, but

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they betray a hankering after the architectural peculiarities and a leaning towards the superstitious observances of idolatrous Rome, which may well startle all those who love christian worship in its chasteness and simplicity, as we enjoy it in our own reformed church. Specimens of the equivocal language, if indeed it merit not a stronger name, which these men use, present themselves in sad profusion. We select a few. One of the party, speaking of images and relics, which our church uncompromisingly brands as "fond things," thus expresses himself,—"That the images of Christ and the Blessed Virgin and the other saints should 'receive due honour and veneration," are "words which themselves go to the very verge of what could be received by the cautious Christian, though possibly admitting of an honest interpretation."

Again, we are told in Tract 90, "that there was a primitive doctrine on all these points," "so widely received and so respectably supported, that it may well be

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entertained as a matter of opinion by a theologian now."

In the same spirit, in reference to the sign of the cross in baptism, a ceremony which our church carefully guards against superstitious construction, they speak of "the sanctifying and perhaps half sacramental use of the sign of the cross." Decorating this ceremony with the flowers of poesy, one of them sings,—

"Whene'er across this sinful flesh of mine
I draw the holy sign,
All good thoughts stir within me and collect
Their slumbering strength divine;
Till there springs up that hope of God's elect,
My faith shall ne'er be wrecked.

And who shall say but hateful spirits around,
For their brief hour unbound,
Shudder to see, and wail their overthrow?
While on far heathen ground
Some lonely saint hails the fresh odour, though
Its source he cannot know."

Such language would be simply absurd, were it not in reality as mischievous as it is extravagant. Nor do these innovators

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confine themselves to theory; practically they endeavour to multiply changes of position, varieties of posture, and imposing accompaniments, in the services of our church, all tending to encumber simplicity and to fold our worship again in the cerements from which the reformers disinterred it.

On the subject of ecclesiastical architecture and furniture we discern the same Rome-ward tendency. Before adverting to documents, let us glance at facts. There has sprung up—God be praised for it—during the present century, a mighty movement in our church towards supplying enlarged accommodation for her members and especially for her poor and neglected children. This movement has been accompanied by a happy return to a more seemly and dignified style of church architecture than had for some time prevailed; and in this we rejoice. But advantage has been taken of this re-action in the public mind, and a

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studied effort made to give to the material building a disproportionate importance, and to carry us back to the peculiarities of the dark ages. Every one possessed of the least observation cannot fail to have been struck with the way in which ecclesiastical architecture and ornament have been obtruded on public attention, and have monopolized the minds of thousands; our print-shops and booksellers' shops, the press and the pulpit have conspired to force on the movement. The dust and rubbish of antiquity have been raked up and groped into to search out precedents and models to direct and determine our modern plans. It is clear that by these means the national mind has been powerfully propelled, and it is scarcely less clear that the propulsion has forced it in the direction of Rome. We are neither Goths in taste, nor Puritans in sentiment, but we dislike and denounce those peculiarities of architecture and furniture which formed the necessary and natural dress

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and accompaniment of Romish forms and ceremonies, which had therefore their place and purpose in the dark ages, but which can now, whatever their artistic beauty, be looked upon as no better than incongruous relics or unmeaning excrescences. It may be said, indeed, that we find most of them in our oldest and noblest churches, and that our reformers did not sweep them away. True, because they found them in existence, and, not willing to mangle the structures as must have been done by destroying those memorials of Rome, they suffered them to remain. But is this a reason why we should introduce these antiquated appendages into the churches we now build? If we do not design to bring in popery afresh, what sense is there in bringing in her symbols and her garniture? How many of the embellishments which are now so much commended to us pertain not to our reformed church but to the church from which we reformed! The altar, the rood-

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screen, the piscina, the crucifix, and the sedilia; these things, in our ordinary churches are misplaced and purposeless; either we should discard them altogether, or we should turn them to their original end: otherwise it looks as if retaining the shadow, we secretly hankered after the substance. What means the rood-screen, unless we are to have a priesthood veiled in mystery and majesty from the people? what means the altar, except we have the sacrifice?—the crucifix without the genuflexion?—the piscina, except we hold transubstantiation? But such things are worse than useless: becoming familiarized to the minds of the people, they may gradually interest their imaginations and fascinate their taste, so that, influenced as the multitude are by what appeals to the passions and the senses rather than by what appeals to the understanding and the spirit, the way may be sloped for them to return to the bosom of Rome; for having learnt

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to love her drapery, they may be imperceptibly drawn to welcome herself.

But in theory as well as practice, the Tractarian party betray a leaning towards the superstition and the symbolism of Romanism. We shall draw our proofs chiefly from a periodical which appears as the accredited organ of a society constituted in Cambridge for the ostensible purpose of improving the style of our ecclesiastical architecture—a praiseworthy purpose if honestly carried out in accordance with the genius of the church to which the association professes to belong. You shall judge, however, whether such has been the case. On the face of the body, we are startled by the display of a seal, adopted as the emblem of their corporate existence, which is utterly repulsive to the feelings of a Protestant. Could it be otherwise, devised, as it avowedly was, by one of the most enthusiastic votaries of Rome, an apostate from our national church. That such a man should

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have been employed for such a purpose by men calling themselves members of our church is as indecent as it is portentous. Nor is the device unworthy of the author. In the centre of the seal, as the distinctive feature of the whole, the Virgin Mary is represented, seated, with the infant Saviour on her lap, her head encircled with rays of light. The magnitude of the mother and the diminutiveness of the child are striking. In truth, the custom of figuring Christ as a mere babe on the knees of his mother, is in itself to be denounced. It is not customary so to paint or sculpture distinguished personages. They are delineated in the fulness of their manhood. Why then represent the Redeemer as though he had been always a helpless infant, at the will and in the care of his blessed mother? Does it accord with the reverence due to *him by whom the worlds were made?* And is there not in it more than meets the eye—a hidden design to magnify her who may be styled the god-

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dess of the church of Rome? On either hand of the Virgin and child are graven the figures of two so-called saints, of whom our church knows nothing—St. George and St. Etheldreda—stars which belong to the firmament of the Romish canon and ought to be allowed to remain there. But it is not worth dwelling longer on this artistic curiosity, which merits notice only on account of the animus which it betokens, and of the names of some by whom it is endorsed.

We hasten to give a few extracts from the organ of this stirring society. Describing the chancel of a church as it ought to be, they give us the following sketch: —"We suppose then a chancel raised a single step of six inches depth at the chancel-arch, and considerably eastward of this, on two other steps, at least, that it has a plain altar of substantial material placed lengthwise under the east window, and well furnished with changes of hangings, and with sacred vessels of proper

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shape; that the south wall is furnished with a single piscina to carry off the water in which the priest has washed his hands before celebration, and westward of this with three sedilia, or seats for the celebrant epistler and gospeller, constructed, if possible, in the masonry of the wall; if not, consisting of oaken tabernacle-work of appropriate pattern; that the north wall is provided with a credence, resembling either a table, or a niche or bracket, and that in all other respects our chancel is entirely free, open, and unoccupied; what more does it require?" So ordered and furnished, the chancel is spoken of as "the Holy of Holies;" into which the "unilluminated are not to be introduced." In the same spirit, treating of the communion-table they give us the following passage, —"In descending to the office for holy communion we would in the first place remark that it is impossible to reprobate in too strong terms the prevalent custom of making the holy altar serve as a book-

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board. For although a handsomely bound and illuminated copy of the book of the holy gospels may properly enough be placed upon the altar, yet every reverential feeling demands that some other support be found for the common service books, and especially when they are in use. We read that when St. Tarasius, patriarch of Constantinople, was too old to be able to kneel without support, he used to rest his arms on a table of wood which was placed for that purpose before the altar. What must the unlearned think when the priests deposit their gloves and handkerchief, as is too commonly the case, on the very table of the Lord? Whether the rubrick by the north side of the table intends to point out the north-east corner of the chancel, or whether it allows the priest to stand at some distance to the west of the altar, provided he places himself to the north of it, is a question which cannot here be positively determined. Some have thought the latter, and we

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incline to their opinion, and would venture to advise the celebrant to take his stand some feet to the north-west of the holy table."

What childish trifling, yet how fraught with error! The studied effort at once to enfold the Eucharist with awe and mystery, and to exalt the clerical order is still farther exhibited in the following extracts :— "In the raising of the south aisle, which is seated for laics, to the same elevation as the chancel, important principles have been violated, both in lessening the distinction between clergy and laymen, and in creating a difference where all should bear witness to equality." . . . . .

And again, "a rood-screen is likewise much needed. Indeed, much as we abominate pues, we could almost bring ourselves to say that unless a rood-screen be provided, there is something overbold and irreverent in removing 'the high closets,' —[by which they mean pews, or pues as they love to call them,]—"which are now

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commonly found fencing and concealing our altars, and thus throwing the Holy of Holies open to the eyes of many who are unfit, or who refuse to communicate in the sacred mysteries."* . . .

Let the laity ponder well the drift of all these sentiments, and mark the design indicated against their spiritual liberties, and their fitting place and standing in the church of Christ.

But it is not in treating of the chancel alone they discover their predilections, but respecting the whole building they say,—"Every part of a church is instinct with doctrine, each architectural feature conveys religious instruction."† Their meaning is thus more fully illustrated.—"The main alley of the church,—that alley which commencing from the font at the door,—stretches along the pathway of a life of much devotion, and passing at this point"—the chancel screen—"the gate of death, conducts into the blessed

*p. 142. †p. 157.

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mansion of the church invisible,"—that is, the chancel! One extract more is too significant to be left out. Alluding to ancient ecclesiastical painting, they furnish this portentous passage. "To those whom humility and purity of heart have gifted with clearness of mental vision, there is something inexpressibly touching and strongly calculated to excite true devotion, in the sight of even the rudest attempts of the primitive church to perpetuate the fervent recollection of the merits of Christ and his saints, and to set forth, in characters legible even to the most unlearned, the jewels of our holy mother. The simplest picture of the blessed Mary, ever virgin, bearing in her immaculate arms the infant Jesus; the rudest delineation of one of the miracles whereby it has pleased God to glorify the saints of his church, cannot fail to excite, in minds duly disposed to acts of faith and love, the most truly devotional disposition. To the poor and unlearned such aids are invaluable. Illi-

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terati quod per scripuram non possunt intueri, hoc per quædam picturæ lineamenta contemplantur. The consecrated statue or picture which the iconoclaust impiously destroys, have been to many the books of life in which to learn obedience and love." . . . . .

Who, reading this paragraph without knowing the source from which it comes, could divine that he was perusing the sentiments of an English churchman.

But enough, and more than enough, of such drivelling superstition. We cannot better take leave of these mystic dreamers than in the language of St. Paul, "In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

Now, men and brethren, we protest against the general tone and tenor of what has been adduced, because it is devoid of any warrant or countenance from the Scriptures of the New Testament. Even under the figurative dispensation, we have ample evidence that God did

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not allow undue attention to be paid to places and ceremonies of worship, but rather that he laid chief stress on the state of the heart. What, for instance, can be stronger than the sublime appeal which God makes to his formal people, in the last chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah? "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Thus explicitly was it revealed, even amid the thick shadows of the law, that the true temple of God is a lowly heart, and the sacrifice in which he delights a contrite spirit. Then, as now, where these were wanting, in vain was material magnificence, in vain were the costliest offerings. "Man looketh on the outward appearance,

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but the Lord looketh on the heart." More than ever is this manifest under the present dispensation: a dispensation distinctively spiritual. Can any man read the New Testament with attention, and not remark the utter absence in it of all minute reference to places and ceremonies of worship. When and how we should assemble ourselves together is scarcely alluded to; the spirit and purpsoe with which we ought to assemble, these are the objects on which attention is fixed. We are, indeed, enjoined to "let all things be done decently and in order," but there is no entering into specific detail, nothing that warrants us to annex much importance to the mere circumstances of public worship. And as for the institutions of the Gospel, —how few are they, and how simple! Praise, prayer, intercession, the foolishness of preaching, and the two holy sacraments, these are all. What a contrast to the complicated, multitudinous rites of the Law? As for the two blessed sacraments, nothing

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can be conceived more simple and inartificial than they are as ordained by the Lord. The effusion of water in the name of the Holy Trinity; the eating and drinking of bread and wine which have been blessed in the name of the Lord,—how exquisitely simple! What is there here of terrible mystery, imposing pomp, or sensible greatness? The spirit, not the letter; the power, not the form, is the glory of the Gospel.

The multiplication of forms and ceremonies, and excessive architectural embellishment ought further to be withstood, because of their tendency to sensualize our worship. Up to a certain point, decent ornament and a certain chaste grandeur of structure, so far as may conduce to elevation and composedness of mind—to a sense of the divine presence—are not to be set at nought, but beyond this, such things tend to chain down the affections to earth, to excite the imagination rather than to quicken the spirit, to work upon

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the senses rather than to tell upon the heart; to enkindle animal emotion, not to foster the calm devotion of the soul. Granting that the imposing accompaniments with which some are so anxious to encumber our public services would help to make them more attractive, fascinating, and popular; does this furnish any argument in their favour, if the result is to be attained by pandering to our carnal nature, by playing upon our passions? St. Paul was so far from regarding a zeal about times and ceremonies as a healthful symptom in those who name the name of Christ, that in addressing the Galatian church, which had corrupted the simplicity which is in Christ, he thus brake forth into righteous sorrow and indignation against their formalism:—"Ye observe days and months and times and years, I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labour upon you in vain;" and again he says, "But now after that ye know God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to

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the weak and beggarly elements?" And after that we of the reformed church have known the truth, or rather have been known of the truth, how go we back to the weak and beggarly elements, the carnal ordinances of the middle ages?

Let us not be misunderstood; we are not finding fault with a large-hearted bountifulness towards the sanctuary and the service of God; we love to witness a generous self-denying spirit on their behalf: neither are we finding fault with the exercise of taste and the use of befitting embellishment in our modern churches; but we do protest against borrowing our ornaments from the appurtenances and peculiarities of Rome. Why are we driven to adopt them? Is it so, that we have no genius or skill of our own? Is it so, that we can devise no architectural beauty that shall harmonize with our chaste and majestic worship? Those things which are in character in the Romish temple, are quite out of place in the reformed church.

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In the former the niche has its image,—the stone basin its holy water,—the altar its sacrifice,—the dim light its service in an unknown tongue. But we who have done away with all these things, what have we to do with their accompaniments? Having discarded the system, why should we retain its adjuncts? They belong to a mode of worship which dramatizes Christianity, and by dramatizing debases it. From the shadow as well as the substance of such superstition may our church be ever kept!

We cannot study the history of the Reformation without being abundantly assured that our reformers did in good earnest study to rid us of all Romish excrescences. The state of our churches at that eventful period was such as almost beggars belief; they were crowded with images, relics, and mummeries, and it required and manifested marvellous soundness of wisdom, firmness of judgment, and steadiness of hand, in our Protestant forefathers,

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so to break loose from their prejudices as not to cling to things which savoured of superstition, and yet so to curb the honest indignation and indiscriminate zeal of a people just roused from the delusion of centuries, as not to let them sweep away the nseful with the useless, and the decent with the extravagant. In doing their work there were given them from on high a meekness of wisdom and a soberness of spirit as rare as they are invaluable. They themselves thus describe the principle on which they went in the course they pursued. In the introduction to the Prayer Book, speaking of ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained, they express themselves on this wise. "Of such ceremonies as be used in the church, and have had their beginning by the institution of man, some at the first were of godly intent and purpose devised, and yet at length turned to vanity and superstition; some entered into the church by indiscreet devotion, and such a zeal as was without

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knowledge; and for because they were winked at in the beginning, they grew daily to more and more abuses, which not only for their unprofitableness but also because they have much blinded the people and obscured the glory of God, are worthy to be cut away and clean rejected; other there be, which although they have been devised by man, yet it is thought good to reserve them still, as well for a decent order in the church, (for the which they were first devised,) as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things done in the church (as the apostle teacheth) ought to be referred.

And although the keeping or omitting of a ceremony, in itself considered, is but a small thing, yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God. "Let all things be done among you," saith St. Paul, "in a seemly and due order." So also, why other ceremonies were discarded they thus

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inform us. "Some were put away, because the great excess and multitude of them hath so increased in these latter days, that the burden of them was intolerable, whereof St. Augustine in his time complained that they were grown to such a number that the estate of christian people was in worse case concerning that matter, than were the Jews. And he counselled that such yoke and burden should be taken away, as time would serve quietly to do it. But what would St. Augustine have said if he had seen the ceremonies of late days used among us; whereunto the multitude used in his time was not to be compared? This our excessive multitude of ceremonies was so great, and many of them so dark, that they did more confound and darken, than declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us. And besides this, Christ's gospel is not a ceremonial law, (as much of Moses' law was,) but it is a religion to serve God not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom

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of the Spirit; being content only with those ceremonies which serve to a due order and godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification whereby he might be edified." The length of these extracts will be forgiven on account of their weight and wisdom; so also we persuade ourselves will be the extent of the following extract from the "Homily against peril of idolatry, and superfluous decking of churches." "In what points the true ornaments of the church or temple of God do consist and stand, hath been declared in the two last homilies, treating of the right use of the temple or house of God, and of the due reverence that all christian people are bound to give unto the same. The sum whereof is, that the church or house of God is a place appointed by the Holy Scriptures where the lively word of God, ought to be read taught, and heard, the Lord's holy name

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called upon by public prayer, hearty thanks given to his majesty for his infinite and unspeakable benefits bestowed upon us, his holy sacraments duly and reverently ministered; and that therefore all that be godly indeed ought both with diligence at times appointed to repair together to the said church, and there with all reverence to use and behave themselves before the Lord. And that the said church thus godly used by the servants of the Lord, in the Lord's true service, for the effectuous presence of God's grace, wherewith he doth by his holy word and promises endue his people there present and assembled to the attainment as well of commodities worldly, necessary for us, as also of all heavenly gifts and life everlasting, is called by the word of God (as it is indeed) the temple of the Lord and the house of God, and that therefore the due reverence thereof is stirred up in the hearts of the godly by the consideration of these true ornaments of the said house of

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God, and not by any outward ceremonies or costly and glorious decking of the said house or temple of the Lord, contrary to the which most manifest doctrine of the Scriptures, and contrary to the usage of the primitive church, which was most pure and uncorrupt, and contrary to the sentences and judgments of the most ancient, learned, and godly doctors of the church, (as hereafter shall appear,) the corruption of these latter days hath brought into the church infinite multitudes of images, and the same with other parts of the temple also, have decked with gold and silver, painted with colours, set them with stone and pearl, clothed them with silks and precious vestures, fancying untruly that to be the chief decking and adorning of the temple or house of God, and that all people should be the more moved to the due reverence of the same, if all corners thereof were glorious, and glistering with gold and precious stones. Whereas, indeed, they by the same images,

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and such glorious decking of the temple, have nothing at all profited such as were wise and of understanding, but have thereby greatly hurt the simple and unwise, occasioning them thereby to commit most horrible idolatry."

It is abundantly clear, then, that however far removed from Puritanical baldness in her sanctuaries and services our church may be, she is sensitively jealous of any approximation to the formalism and superstition of Rome. Would that all who minister in her courts had imbibed her spirit of moderation, and were content with her orderly simplicity!

We do not feel warranted in finishing this discourse without addressing to you a twofold caution. On the one hand, beware of irreverence and disorderliness. A chief peril in times of collision and excitement, springs out of the tendency one extreme has to drive men into the opposite extreme. Take heed, therefore, that your just repugnance to innovations upon the

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accustomed order of our worship do not betray you into a disregard of her wise provisions that all things may be done decently and in order, that we may have uniformity without slavery, and liberty without irregularity. It is much to be desired, and ought to be aimed at, it would greatly subserve calm devotion, that in all our churches we should find as nearly as possible the same order; that in all we should be able to recognize the outward and visible sign of a common faith and common fellowship; that there should be nothing in any of them fitted by its unwontedness to perplex or jar the spirit. It cannot be denied that whilst torpor and lifelessness disgrace some of our solemn assemblies, others are disfigured by a want of solemnity, tranquillity, and order. Punctuality in attendance on the house of prayer, observance of the postures prescribed by the rubric, and above all, individual participation in the responsive and musical portions of divine

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worship,—these are matters of no small importance. Remember, when you cross the threshold of the sanctuary, in *whose* special presence you profess to be: and throughout Divine worship, remember that you are not come *to hear* prayers, but *to pray;* you are not come *to listen* to psalmody, but *to sing psalms;* you are not come to criticise, but to profit,—to be amused, but to be saved. Thus using, whilst not abusing, our liturgical services, you will find them alike edifying and delightful. Prejudiced and opiniated men may brand them as the crutches of devotion, and set at nought such assistances, but we have learned a more excellent way. Christ himself gave us a form of prayer, and left us an example of worshipping with the body as well as with the soul. He lifted up his eyes to heaven when he gave thanks, he spread forth his hands when he blessed, and he kneeled down, or bowed to the ground when he prayed. Fitness, indeed, requires that the body should express the emo-

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tions of the mind, and that we should glorify God with the casket as well as with the pearl which it encloses. Both should be consecrate to Him who fashioned both, and so formed them that they reciprocally act and re-act.

On the other hand, however, see to it that you do not rest in the form—that you do not conclude that you have worshipped God merely because you have gone through the order of worship. In vain the altar, the wood, the victim,—all the requisites for the offering, if, as with the worshippers of Baal, fire be wanting to kindle the sacrifice. And remember, the fire must not be "strange fire,"—it must be from heaven, not from earth, lighted by the Holy Spirit, not excited by the senses. Or, to change the figure, remember that prayer is the breath of the soul, and you cannot breathe until you live, and you cannot live except Christ live in you.

And let us not forget wherein lieth the

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true glory and greatness of our church; not in pomp and splendour, not in secular honour or architectural magnificence, but in purity of doctrine, power of ministration, presence of the Holy Ghost, and multitude of spiritual offspring nurtured and educated by her for the church triumphant in heaven. Let these things, therefore, engross the attention and call forth the best energies of her faithful children. It is marvellous, and sad as it is marvellous, to see men of sincere and powerful minds agitated and absorbed by mere accidents of the church; matters which, irrespectively of the ends to which they may conduce, are but as a feather in the scales. Have not the ambassadors of Christ something immeasurably more momentous and august to engage their attention than the sculpturing of a chancel, the emblazoning of a window, the chiselling of a font, or the embroidering of a cloth? What! when they avow themselves to have a dispensation of the Gospel

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committed to them! to have the stewardship of the unsearchable riches of Christ for a perishing world! What! when eternity is at hand; the Judge before the door; and souls, the worth of which no mind but *one* can tell, are balancing between heaven and hell, and have their destiny suspended to a fearful extent on the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of those who watch for them! Can it astonish us to find that thoughtful laymen are in sore jeopardy of being revolted into scepticism, when they see the shepherds of that flock "of God which He purchased with His own blood," carried away by perishing trifles,—zealous for the fold, but heedless of the sheep!

Let us pray, then, brethren, let us earnestly pray for the spiritual prosperity of our beloved church, of her bishops, priests, and deacons, and of all her members; let us pray that the Redeemer may never forsake her: then, though she should be tossed, as was the fisherman's bark on the

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sea of Galilee ; though the winds should shake her, and the waves beat into her, He who is in her will cause His voice to be heard in the hour of her need, saying,— "Peace, be still," and there shall be a great calm !

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SERMON XIV.

RECAPITULATION AND IMPROVEMENT.

JUDE 3.—Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

So soon did it come to pass that those who builded the spiritual temple were called upon to fulfil their vocation as watchmen no less than as workmen, as set for the defence as well as for the diffusion of the truth. And from that period to the present, the faithful in Christ Jesus have had to battle for the faith. They have been under the necessity of carrying on

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their work as those who built the walls of Jerusalem in troublous times had to carry on theirs,—with one hand each man held his weapon, and with the other he wrought in the wall. Thus it is now: the conflict has still to be maintained. And if justification of the course of instruction which we have been addressing to you were required, it might be found in a simple accommodation of the words of St. Jude to our own times and circumstances. May we not without perversion say,—"Beloved, when we gave all diligence to discourse to you concerning the common salvation, it was needful for us to discourse and to exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." For assuredly that faith is invaded, and that salvation assailed by the sentiments which we have been striving to expose. In winding up this series of discourses, we shall in the first place glance across the field which we have traversed, that so we may in some measure concentrate

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the impression of the course upon your minds, and we shall then, in the next place, deduce from the whole some of the practical lessons with which it is fraught. May the Spirit of God give power to the ministration of His word!

We introduced the discussion by endeavouring to illustrate and establish the right, or rather the duty, of exercising individual judgment on the things which belong to our peace. We showed you that reason and revelation alike enforce such exercise, as essential to responsibility and rational faith. It was then proved that the Tractarian school aim at bereaving man of this sacred birthright, and converting him into a passive machine in the hands of the church, or rather of the priesthood. Whilst contending for modesty and meekness due reverence and submission to wisdom and authority, in forming our judgment on the things of God, we yet insisted, that as every individual must *answer* for himself to God, so ought

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every individual to examine, judge, and determine for himself.

Having vindicated the claim of man to prove what he is called upon to believe and obey, it followed in the next place that we should make it clear that Holy Scripture is the one supreme standard by which his judgment ought to be ruled. Here, again, we were called upon to combat the views of the Anglo-Romish party, because fitted to unsettle, disparage, and dishonour the Word of God, — representing it, as *resting* on tradition for its authority,—*requiring* tradition for its completion, and *depending* on tradition for its interpretation. On the contrary, we proved that the written revelation of God is self-evidencing and self-sustaining, perfect and sufficient, unequivocal and intelligible, needing to be understood, not to be interpreted.

Our next link in the chain of illustration was the institution and perpetuation

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of an authentic ministry of the word and ordinances of Christ, and the functions which appertain to such a ministry. On this subject, whilst we entered into extended proof that the episcopal channel, as enjoyed by our own church, is the apostolical and catholic provision for perpetuating the Christian ministry, and that to this ministry, so perpetuated, special privileges and special functions pertain, we at the same time strenuously opposed the views which would shut up the grace of God exclusively to such a ministry, and make truth of office paramount to truth of doctrine, and holiness of life. No less earnestly did we withstand the notions which would exalt the clerical order into "lords over God's heritage," instead of regarding them as servants in the household, and shepherds of the flock.

After explaining and defending the ministry which we enjoy, it followed as a consecutive step, that we should vindicate

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our church in general, and the reformation of our church in particular, from the aspersions which have been cast upon both. By a summary induction of historical facts, we endeavoured to prove to you that the Anglican church is a primitive, apostolical, and independent branch of the Christian church; that she owes neither fealty nor submission to the Romish church; and that by the blessed Reformation she did not become schismatical, but catholic,—innovating, but primitive,—rebellious, but free. We further showed you that she was reformed not from without, but from within; by her own sons, not by strangers, and that so reformed, she has not been mutilated but restored; she has not been sullied, but purified and adorned.

The church of our land having been thus justified, the inquiry arose in course, how those who separate themselves from her ought to be regarded. On this

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delicate point we strove to inform your minds with meekness of wisdom, showing the duty and importance of visible union, at least in our own land, and consequently the blameableness of causeless and capricious division. That a large amount of the schism which distracts our country deserves to be so regarded, we think was made apparent, yet, at the same time, we strongly urged that in days gone by many offences and stumbling-blocks in connexion with the national church had served to palliate though not to justify separation from her; and that therefore, on the one side there ought to be an honest, unprejudiced desire and effort to heal division and return to the fold of their fathers, and that this ought to be met on the other side by a spirit of undissembled candour, forbearance, and kindness, accompanied by a strenuous endeavour to obviate every real occasion of offence.

As next in order, we proceeded to mag-

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nify, and to vindicate from disparagement, that special function of the Christian ministry, "the foolishness of preaching." By the commission given to the ambassadors of Christ, by the power ascribed to preaching, by the honour put upon this instrumentality, and by the comparative inefficiency of other means when this is lacking or unsound, we showed the estimation in which it ought to be held. Whence we inferred how unwarrantable and injurious the slighting tone in which the Tractators speak of this ordinance of God.

But, since these misguided men not only depreciate preaching, but seek to deprive it of the secret of its power by inculcating reserve and mystery in the communication of the knowledge of Christ crucified, we were further led to show that it is the manifestation of the Saviour as the propitiation for sin, which constitutes the essence of the message which we bear, and which is the grand instrument

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for awakening the guilty, healing the contrite, and sanctifying the believing.

The next link in our chain of discussion was the doctrine of justification through faith in the atonement. We showed you from holy Scripture how clear the proof, and how vital the importance of this great tenet:—so clear, that none in Scripture is more certain,—so vital that to repudiate it is in effect to reject the gospel. Yet, as it was our melancholy task to prove, there is no point on which those who incline to Rome are more unsound, or which they more elaborately strive to darken, weaken, or set aside, than this cardinal tenet; confounding justification with sanctification, and making the latter the cause, not the consequence of the former, thus founding our hope of salvation on the work of Christ in us, not on the work of Christ accomplished for us.

The holy sacrament of baptism, as the sign and seal of our new-birth and our forgiveness, then engaged our attention.

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It appeared from their own writings that the Tractarian authors represent this ordinance as depending for its efficacy on due administration rather than on due reception, as operating independently of faith in the subject, and as necessarily involving, in the case of infants at least, the renewal of the heart. In opposition to these notions we showed you that neither scripture nor the church teaches that the efficacy of baptism is absolute,—they both teach that it is conditional,—sincerity and preparedness being assumed in the case of the adult, and the privileges of the cov e-nant in the case of an infant, being assured to him on the strength of his future fulfilment of the engagements to which he is committed.

In connexion with baptism we were led to expose an error alike strange and pernicious,—that sin after baptism can hardly, if at all, receive forgiveness. It was abundantly easy to evince how completely this figment is in the face of the spirit and the

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language of the gospel; how it would neutralize the hopes of every believer; plunge every Christian into despair, and make baptism a curse rather than a blessing. At the same time we found the testimony of our church against the error most full, explicit, and glorious.

From the sacrament of our new birth we proceeded to contemplate the sacrament of our spiritual nutrition. Here, again, it was saddening to trace how closely the Tractarian school approach to the heresies of Rome;—adopting transubstantiation in the spirit, if not in the letter;—advocating a sacrifice if not identical with, nearly resembling, the sacrifice of the mass, and indicating no doubtful hankering after the adoration of the elements. In contradistinction to their sentiments we sought, whilst guarding you on the one hand against regarding the blessed ordinance as a mere memorial, or treating it with anything but the deepest reverence, to show you, on the other hand,

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that the Word of God and the Church of England maintain that a spiritual presence is the real presence,—that we commemorate the great sacrifice, and by faith appropriate it, but in no sense renew or repeat it,—and that the consecrated bread and wine are to be regarded as altogether unchanged, save as set apart to a holy purpose, and therefore relatively holy.

Our next topic of discussion was fasting and voluntary humility. With regard to the former we made it evident to you that although Scripture and the church sanction, and to a certain extent enforce, the observance, yet they give no countenance to the exaggerated views of its importance, and the strange notions of its meritoriousness which some modern divines have broached. As it respects uncalled for asceticism, we found that nothing can be more contrary to the genius and tendency of the blessed gospel of the grace of God than anything of the kind. Self-denial, indeed, of the flesh and of the

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spirit, is inseparable from Christianity, and springs inevitably out of the state of our nature and circumstances. But where the inward power is lacking, in vain is all abstinence and austerity. They serve to delude rather than to profit, to foster pride rather than subdue the flesh. Fasting we proved to you ought to be the shadow not the substance,—the accompaniment rather than the instrument of humiliation and contrition.

Before terminating our series of discourses, we deemed it important to put you on your guard against the extravagant and delusive opinions on the subject of ecclesiastical architecture, furniture, and forms which are so unhappily prevalent at the present juncture. Whilst contending for decency and order in our services, congruity and dignity in our sanctuaries, we made it clear that the Bible and the Church alike condemn whatever has a tendency to formalize, materialize, or sensualize our worship; that they fix attention

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on *the heart* of the worshipper, and yield small notice to ceremonies, buildings, or embellishments. Hence, we showed that it was trifling, and far worse than trifling, to divert the mind and energy of the church from the spiritual temple which she ought ever to be rearing, to the mere temporary scaffolding of that temple,—from the dread realities of our faith to the accidents and circumstantials of our worship.

And now, christian brethren, having summarily recalled to your memories the successive links in the chain of discourses which we have addressed to you, it only remains that we seek to bring home to your hearts some weighty conclusions from the entire course.

In the outset then, and once more, we would strongly infer that the controversy which is agitating our church is of the deepest moment. We have seen that the points at issue involve more or less nearly all the great questions in debate between

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us and Rome. We have seen that our struggle is not, as some would represent it to be, a struggle about party words and distinctions, matters of ritual and observance, but about the very pith and kernel of the gospel of Christ. The upshot of it must be whether we are to maintain or deform the Reformation, whether we are to withstand or succumb to Rome, whether the Creed of Pope Pius or the Thirty-Nine Articles are to be our confession of faith. Spite of disguise, plausibility, and Jesuitism, *this* is the gist of the contest. Can we then be neuter? Ought we to be indifferent? Every man must take his side. It is a question of principle, not of party. To countenance therefore, to accompany even for a small way, to follow even afar off, those who would "unprotestantize" our church, is, in a measure at least, to subserve their purpose and to share their guilt. Had an unhesitating stand been made long ago, and had the defenders of our church as she is,

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withstood those who are plotting to revolutionise her, with the boldness and the breadth with which they ought to have done, "the conspiracy" would never have been so successful, nor the mischief so wide. Our next inference is akin to the last. It is that the whole system which we have been exposing has converged and is converging more and more on Rome as its centre. You have seen that the principles propounded, and the positions assumed, necessarily place their maintainers on an inclined plane, down which they can hardly fail to move with accelerating speed into the depths of the mystery of iniquity. After all, then, our battle is with our ancient and inveterate foe, the great adversary of Christ and his truth, the relentless enemy of all who will not bow to her yoke. Let no man therefore, deceive you with vain words. Suffer not the mask to hide from you the true features of our antagonist. We have tenfold more to fear from the

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mine and the ambuscade than from the assault or the battering-ram. Let the young and confiding be more especially on their guard against the blandishments and allurements which are brought to bear upon them; let them when tempted to gather the fair but forbidden fruit that entices them, recoil from the serpent which lurks beneath the leaves.

A further lesson which we would anew urge upon your minds, and which we may safely assert we have abundantly exemplified is, that our church is not the parent but the opponent of the mischievous system which some of her unnatural offspring are striving to fasten upon her. It may be granted, indeed,—nor does our devotedness to her forbid us to grant,—that in a few outward and secondary things she has retained some slight traces of her ancient servitude to Rome which were better blotted out. But, after all, what are these but specks in the moon, or crevices in the battlements of the tower?

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How clearly have we seen that on all the main questions at stake, our church is, save the Scriptures, the greatest obstacle to the success of those who have combined to betray the truth for which our Reformers bled. Is it not against the church they are struggling? Why else is it that whilst loud in their protestations of devotion to her, they are so dissatisfied with her reformation and so bitter against her reformers? Why is it that they so fret about the assumed deficiencies of her services, and so bewail the reputed mutilations which she has undergone? Why else do they study to twist and sophisticate her Articles, contending for a mode of interpretation and acceptation which outrages common sense and drags common honesty through the mire? Why else their restlessness and conflict of mind, whilst they struggle hard to reconcile it to their consciences that they should minister within her pale whilst their sympathies are with Rome? They themselves then

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are witnesses to themselves of the thorough Protestantism of the church,—even as the waves which break against the rocks which flank our shores manifest the strength of the barriers against which they dash. The ashes of Smithfield and the spirits of our martyrs are scarcely more convincing witnesses to the Protestantism of our church than are the Anglo-Romanists who pour contempt upon both.

Be not then, we pray you, shaken in your attachment to your church. Ought the patriot to forsake his country because he has discovered a conspiracy against her laws and her liberties? Ought the seaman to abandon his vessel because a mutiny exists amongst some of her crew? Ought he not rather to stand by her the more faithfully and guard her the more jealously? And shall we not so act by our faithful church? Does she not deserve it at our hand? Let us defend the truth behind the battlements with which she is surrounded. Her foes must force

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her to betray her trust before we can desert her. It is for the truth's sake we love her, and they must strip her of that treasure, or they cannot estrange us from her breast.

But let us bring home to you inferences of a more personal kind. In the present critical position of divine truth amongst us, let us not be high-minded, but fear. Let our hearts tremble for the ark of God, —not for its own safety, for it is safe as the throne of the Almighty, but for its continuance amongst ourselves. Is there not a cause? Has not God a controversy with us? Does He ever chasten a church except that church have transgressed? Must there not, then, be some provocation amongst us? It may be that in part we suffer correction for the long season of lethargy and darkness which preceded the awakening and illumination of latter times. For it not unseldom happens in the dealings of God, that punishment comes upon his people after the immediate occasion of his displeasure has passed away.

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So it befel Israel in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah; although these men of God wrought a marvellous reformation in the Jewish church, yet for all this the Lord's anger was not turned away from the people, but he began to cut them off because of their former sins. But whether the Lord chide us for past or present unfaithfulness, or rather for both, nothing can be clearer than that we are called upon to search and try our ways, and to humble ourselves beneath his mighty hand. A boastful spirit, a spirit of defiance, was never more out of place than at present. Would we arrest the evil that threatens to overwhelm us, we must give ourselves to confession, humiliation, and prayer. The battle of the Reformation was won, and it must be fought anew, on bended knee.

Who can contemplate the resuscitative energy with which the mystery of iniquity is working throughout the world—who can survey the ramifications of papal dominion and at the same time the concentration of its power,—who can mark how

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that overwhelming power, guided by the most consummate subtlety, is being brought to bear against ourselves,—who can perceive the treason which has sprung up within our own citadel,—who can witness the strange and manifold influences which concur to give new strength and triumph to the beast that had received the deadly wound,—who can lay these things to heart, and not be constrained to exclaim with those of old,—we know not what to do, but our eyes are unto thee, O Lord God! Arise, O God! maintain thine own cause, and let not the ungodly triumph.

Another lesson which we are most anxious to bring home to the consciences of all of you, is the necessity for your being rooted and grounded in the truth as it is in Jesus. The lack of this has largely led to our present perils. The stream of evangelical truth has become more shallow as it has become more diffused. Has not this been made mournfully

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apparent in this sifting season?—have not many young persons of seemingly earnest and promising piety, who had clean escaped the pollutions of the world, been entangled and drawn aside by the beggarly elements of a carnal system? And have not many ministers who once preached the truth boldly, and appeared to be valiant for it, now substituted for it another gospel, which is yet not another, and who destroy what once they builded? Such wrecks are as instructive as they are melancholy. They teach us with a thrilling emphasis that devout feeling profits little without living faith, and that the truth held in theory while its experimental power is wanting, as it will not avail us in the day of judgment, so neither will it preserve us in the day of earthly trial. Yea, many times God punishes a barren knowledge of the truth by giving up the fruitless professor to a strong delusion to believe a lie. From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he

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seemeth to have. He that lacketh the fruits of the Spirit is blind, and cannot see afar off. Such persons, therefore, present the fittest and readiest dupes to plausible error. Beware then, that you do not mistake transient conviction for the work of the Spirit, that you do not adopt the truths of the Gospel as empty notions, not as commanding principles of action; that your faith do not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. You must taste the truth, digest the truth, handle the truth, grasp the truth, live the truth—then the truth can never be wrested from you. A thousand-fold greater confidence against the day of trial may be placed in the stability of a simple, unlettered peasant who has been taught the things of God by the Spirit of God,—who has the witness in himself,—who lives in the truth,—rejoices in the truth,—and dies daily for its sake, than in the stability of the most accomplished master of divinity that ever graduated in theological university, who has

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learned all that human wisdom can attain, but has not learnt what the Holy Ghost alone can teach,—who holds the truth with daylight clearness, but without warmth, without love, without vitality. See to it, therefore, beloved, that you have dug deep and builded your house on the rock, that so when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon your house, it may stand unshaken, because founded upon the rock.

Further, christian brethren, let us watch and pray that we enter not into temptation. There are rash and curious persons who are ever athirst for something new. Novelty in divinity is the great charm for them. To hear or read something strange is their delight. They seem to fancy that the way to come at the truth is to examine every thing that can be said against it, and to read everything that pretends to be truth. How does scripture pourtray such individuals?—"ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of

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the truth." If a man has got the truth, what more does he want; if he has proved it and set his seal to it, why should he tamper with every counterfeit that he meets? If he is feeding on the bread of life and the sincere milk of the word, and growing thereby, what occasion has he to be hankering after spicy and unwholesome viands? Had our first parents been content with God's allotment, and not wished to know forbidden wisdom by attaining to the knowledge of evil, they would never have forfeited the good which they enjoyed. Keep, therefore, humbly and simply to God's holy word and ordinances, to the order and the worship of your scriptural church, striving always to become more deeply and experimentally acquainted with what you already know, rather than to be ever thirsting after something which ye do not know. The quiet, lowly, childlike pilgrim in the narrow way is he who bids fairest to arrive most safely and peacefully at his journey's end.

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We are thus reminded of the most weighty inference to be deduced from all that has been inculcated—*the sole supreme authority of the written word.* We are more than ever taught to take as our watchword the immortal sentiment of Chillingworth, "the Bible, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants." With the adoption of this principle the Reformation rose,—with the abandonment of it, the Reformation would fall: however much we may revere the authority of our church, however much esteem our formularies of worship and confessions of faith, however much appreciate an authorized ministry of the word and sacraments,—none of these, nor all of these must be suffered to come between us and the record of truth, must be allowed to shake its supremacy. Brethren, be men of one book. Let the decisive question ever be—what saith the Scriptures? Whether your contest be with the Romanist, the Anglo-Romanist, or the schismatic, use no weapon but the.

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sword of the Spirit. It alone has an edge of such heavenly temper that no form of heresy can resist it; there are no bands of error which it cannot cut asunder. Let the Bible be to us the centre of unity, our banner in the camp, and our watchword in the field. Men may deceive us,—human systems fluctuate,—our own reasons waver,—but the Word of the living God we may say with Augustine, "Thy scriptures are my delight, I shall neither be deceived in them, nor shall I deceive by them."

Need we add, how urgently we are called upon to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints? At a period like the present, even should we be kept from heresy, we are in imminent danger of lukewarmness and latitudinarianism. Christ foretold that in former times because iniquity should abound the love of many should wax cold. And still the abounding of iniquity, and above all of divers and strange doctrines, has a

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chilling effect. Beware of this deadly influence; better the vehement bigot than the heartless philosophical professor of orthodoxy. Earnestness in error is less blameable than lukewarmness in truth. Wherefore, beloved, be zealously affected in the faith. Be valiant for the truth. Let your jealousy for its purity be sensitive as the apple of an eye. Let none hold himself excused from standing forward in the ranks of the faithful. The Apostle Jude addressed his exhortation to the whole body of the church, to the laity as well as to the bishops and presbyters. His epistle is styled,—"the general epistle of Jude." Consequently, he summons to the righteous contest all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

At the same time, brethren beloved, let us see to it that all our doings be done with charity. How hard is it to keep the dew of kindness fresh upon the spirit amid the heats and blasts of controversy! Yet, without charity all our zeal will be nothing

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worth, and thongh we gave our bodies to be burned, it would profit us nothing. Let us contend for the truth in the spirit of the truth. "*Earnestly*," not angrily; *tenderly*, not bitterly. In this way, however ungifted with acuteness of understanding and power of reasoning, you may often avail more with the adversaries of truth than would the most masterly controversialist who dipped his pen in gall. The force of kindness and forbearance is often more effectual than the force of argument, and the man who would be proof against your talent may be taken captive by your temper. Pray much and heartily for those whom you oppose; you will find this the best antidote to asperity and resentment.

In connexion with this point of practical wisdom, we feel called upon to guard you against a hasty, suspicious, censorious, judgment of others. David tells us that he said in his haste,—"all men are liars;" and in times of perturbation, treachery, in-

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stability, and unfaithfulness, the servants of God still encounter the same temptation. In such circumstances how hard is it to cherish the charity which "believeth all things, and hopeth all things," as well as "endureth all things!" Guard, therefore, against evil surmisings, against putting harsh constructions on doubtful appearances. Because a brother may differ from us in some slighter matters, or because he may adopt certain observances or advocate certain opinions which are commonly supposed to indicate an inclination towards the unhappy movement which is disquieting our church, do not at once set him down as having embraced all the errors of those towards whom he may seem to be tending. Do not brand him as having forsaken the faith. To do so is as unwise as it is unfair; it is fitted to revolt and drive forward the individual, and to produce or precipitate the evil which we apprehend. Ought we not rather to seek to restore such an one in the spirit of

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meekness? And if we deem ourselves stronger than he, to show our superior strength by bearing the infirmities of the weak. Such a course requires, indeed, much more of self-denial, humility, and toil, but is it not the course which becomes the Christian? Where nature would prompt us to condemn, let grace constrain us to wait. Where nature would urge us to proscribe, let grace constrain us to pray.

Once more:—let the perils and perplexities, the distractions and the forebodings which are thickening upon us, lead us to trust more simply under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty. May we not distinguish amid the rising of the storm a still, small voice, that saith,—"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." In closer communion with God, in deeper and more intimate fellowship, let us find

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strength and stayedness for the evil day. So shall we in patience possess our souls, so shall we be calm yet earnest, serious but not sad. If God be for us, who shall be against us? If it is his very truth we are struggling for, and if we are struggling for it truly, the issue cannot be doubtful,—to ourselves at least it must be peace.

Finally, brethren, what will be the end of these things? We have a strong impression that the end of them is not yet: and that could we fully forecast the end, it would overawe the stoutest spirit. We have a conviction, which grows upon us, that we are verging fast on those days which prophecy has so clearly foretold; days of convulsion and desolation such as have not been since the world began; days when the cup of trembling shall be put into the hands of unfaithful Christendom, and the dregs of that cup shall be wrung out to the unbelieving; days when antichrist, and every other adversary, shall

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be destroyed by the brightness of the coming of the Son of Man! What then? However we may feel awe-struck at the foreshadowings of such a crisis, shall we not, as wearied of the sad, distracted state of the visible church, as sick at heart for the dishonour put on that holy name by which we are called, and for the miseries of an unevangelized world, as praying with our hearts as well as with our lips,—"thy kingdom come,"—shall we not rejoice, even though with trembling, that our prayer is about to be fulfilled, our Lord to be avenged on his enemies and glorified in his saints? Surely, if it be by the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire, God will prepare the way of his Son, and usher in the times of the restitution of all things, we ought not to look with terror or despair on the gathering and brooding of the elements which indicate that the tempest is nigh which will herald the dayspring of holiness and peace. Rather, whilst we humble ourselves in the

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dust, yea, and mourn for the calamities that are coming upon the earth, let us with awful ecstacy hearken to the voice that proclaims,—"Behold, I come quickly," and let us from the depth of our spirits respond,—"Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus." "And now, brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

THE END.

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